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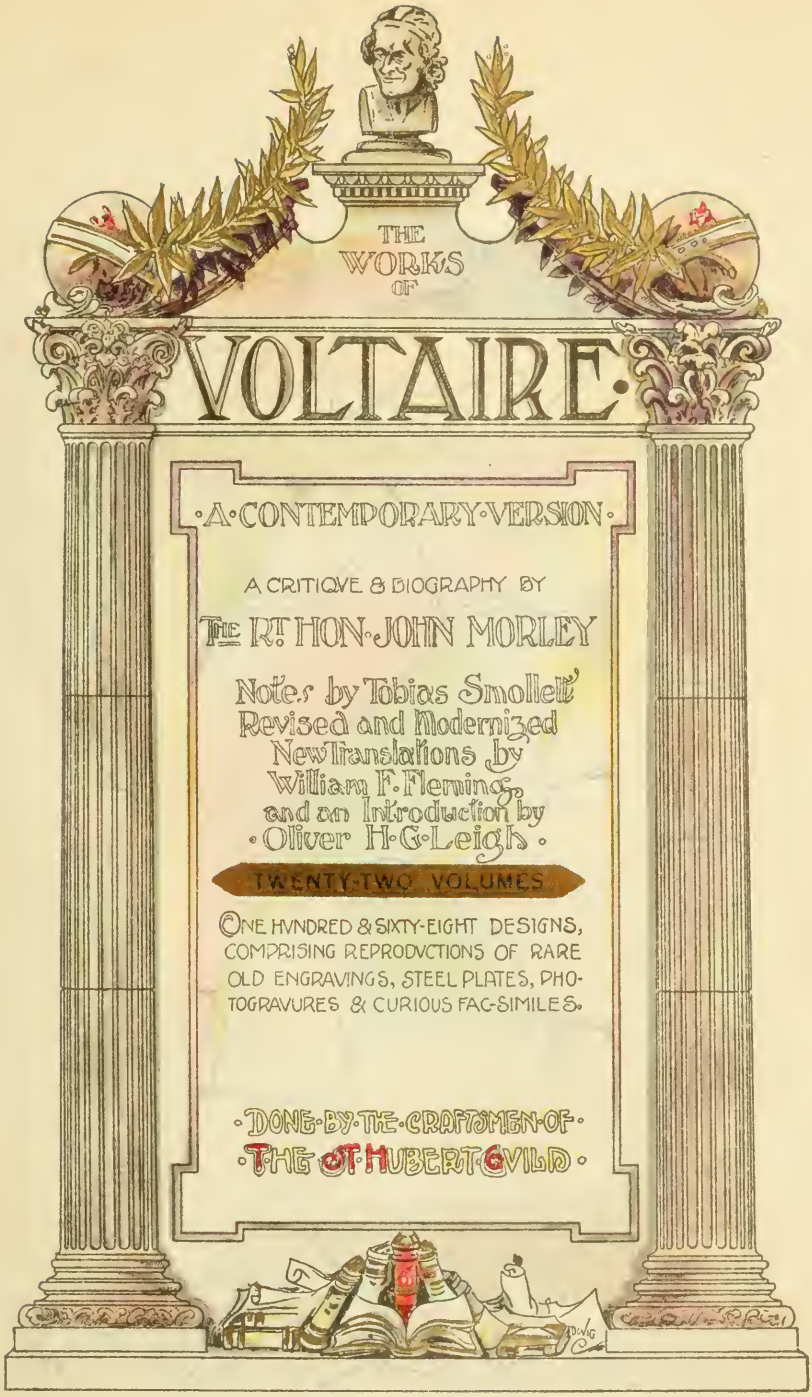
*The WORKS of VOLTAIRE*

"*Between two servants of Humanity, who appeared eighteen hundred years apart, there is a mysterious relation.* * * * * *Let us say it with a sentiment of profound respect: JESUS WEPT: VOLTAIRE SMILED. Of that divine tear and of that human smile is composed the sweetness of the present civilization.*"

*VICTOR HUGO.*

VOLTAIRE
COUNT D'ARGENTAL



THE WORKS OF

# VOLTAIRE

A CONTEMPORARY VERSION

A CRITIQVE & BIOGRAPHY BY

THE RT HON JOHN MORLEY

Notes by Tobias Smollett
Revised and Modernized
New Translations by
William F. Fleming
and an Introduction by
Oliver H.G. Leigh

TWENTY-TWO VOLUMES

ONE HVNDRED & SIXTY-EIGHT DESIGNS, COMPRISING REPRODVCTIONS OF RARE OLD ENGRAVINGS, STEEL PLATES, PHOTOGRAVURES & CURIOUS FAC-SIMILES.

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# VOLTAIRE

## ESSAYS
ON
## LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, ART, HISTORY

VOL. XIX — PART I

# CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Voltaire's Academy Speech | 5 |
| Voltaire's Funeral Eulogium | 27 |
| The "Anti-Lucretius" of Cardinal de Polignac | 48 |
| On Fable | 52 |
| On Wit | 57 |
| On a Custom in Holland | 68 |
| The Profession of Letters | 70 |
| On Corruption of Style | 77 |
| To a Certain Upper Clerk | 80 |
| On a Remarkable Circumstance | 85 |
| Discourse to the Welsh | 89 |
| On Ancient and Modern Tragedy | 115 |
| The Political Testament of Cardinal Alberoni | 142 |
| The Soul | 152 |
| Toleration | 159 |
| Descartes and Newton | 164 |
| Newton's Chronology | 177 |
| Dissertation by Dr. Akakia | 183 |
| How Far We should Impose on the People | 199 |

Titles of Honor . . . . . 203
On Commerce and Luxury . . . . . 211
Money and the Revenues of Kings . . 219
Thoughts on the Public Administration 226
Dialogue on Excommunication . . . 240
Observations on History . . . . . 257
The Skepticism of History . . . . 269
Letter to a Professor of History . . 280

# LIST OF PLATES

## Part I


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Count d'Argental . . . *Frontispiece* | |
| Sir Isaac Newton . . . . . | 164 |

# ESSAYS

ON

# LITERATURE: PHILOSOPHY: ART: HISTORY.

## VOLTAIRE'S SPEECH

ON HIS RECEPTION INTO THE FRENCH ACADEMY, WITH NOTES.

Delivered on May 9, 1746.

GENTLEMEN:

Your founder transfused into your establishment all the greatness and dignity of his own soul, by ordaining that you should always be free and equal. And indeed he acted wisely in raising above dependence those who were above all selfish and interested views, and who, as generous as himself, did letters the honor which they so well deserve, namely, that of studying them for their own sake.[1] It was

[1] The French Academy is the oldest establishment of that kind in France. It was at first composed of some men of letters, who met together for the sake of mutual conversation. It is not divided into honorary and pensionary members. Its privileges are merely honorary, such as that enjoyed by the commensals of the palace, of not being

to be feared that the ardor of prosecuting these noble studies might one day be relaxed. In order, therefore, to preserve it in its full vigor, you made a law, by which you bound yourselves to admit none as members of your academy but such as resided in Paris. From this law, however, you have wisely deviated in receiving in your number those extraordinary geniuses who were called elsewhere by their honorable employments, but who by their sensible or sublime performances were always present with you; for it would be to violate the spirit of a law not to transgress the letter of it in favor of great men. If the late president Bouhier, after having flattered himself with the pleasing hopes of consecrating the rest of his days to your company, was obliged to pass them at a considerable distance, both he and the academy were comforted for their mutual loss, by reflecting that he cultivated your sciences with his usual industry in the city of Dijon, which has produced so many great men,[1] and where genius seems to be one of the characteristics of the citizens.

He put us in mind of those times when the most austere magistrates, accomplished like him in the knowledge of the laws, unbent their minds from the cares of state, by indulging in the amusements of literature. What pitiful wretches are those who

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obliged to plead out of Paris; that of addressing the king in a body with the superior courts; and that of being accountable to none but the king.

[1] Messieurs de la Monnoye, Bouhier, Lantin, and above all, the eloquent Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, who is commonly considered as the last father of the church.

despise these agreeable studies; who place a kind of solitary grandeur in shutting themselves up within the narrow circle of their own employments! Do they not know that Cicero, after having filled the first place in the world, still continued to plead the causes of his fellow-citizens, wrote on the nature of the gods, conversed with men of letters, went to the theatre, condescended to cultivate the friendship of Æsopus and Roscius, and left little minds to enjoy their solemn gravity, which is only the mask of ignorance and weakness?

The president Bouhier was a man of great learning; but did not resemble those useless and unsociable scholars, who neglect the study of their own tongue to acquire an imperfect knowledge of ancient languages; who think they have a right to despise their own times, because they imagine they have some little acquaintance with former ages; who admire a passage in Æschylus, but have never enjoyed the pleasure of shedding a tear at our own plays. He translated Petronius's poem on the civil war; not that he considered that declamation (which is full of false thoughts) as nearly equal to the chaste and elegant sublimity of Virgil: on the contrary, he knew that Petronius's satire,[1] though dis-

[1] Saint-Évremond admires Petronius, because he takes him for a great courtier, and believed himself to be such. This was the folly of the times. Saint-Évremond and several others assert that Nero is represented under the name of Trimalchion: but can an old, fat, and ridiculous farmer of the revenues, and his old wife, an impertinent citizen, be said to resemble a young emperor and his young spouse, Octavia, or the young Poppæa? Can the debaucheries and

tinguished here and there by charming strokes of wit, is no more than the whimsical production of a young man of mean condition, whose manners and style were alike irregular. Some men who pretend to be the most perfect masters of taste and pleasure, esteem the whole of Petronius's works; but M. Bouhier, a man of greater judgment, does not even esteem all that he translated. It is one proof, among many others, how much reason has been improved in the present age, that a translator is no longer a blind admirer of his author; but can treat him with the same impartiality as he would grant a contemporary. He exercised his talents on this poem, on the "Hymn to Venus," and on Anacreon, in order to show that the poets ought to be translated into verse, an opinion which he defended with great warmth; nor will it be thought strange that my sentiments are the same as his.

Allow me, gentlemen, to enter a little more deeply into these literary discussions; my doubts before such learned judges as you will be equal to decisions. In this manner I may possibly contribute to the improvement of the arts; and I had much rather deliver in your presence a useful than an eloquent discourse.

Why is it that Homer, Theocritus, Lucretius, Virgil, and Horace have been happily translated into

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petty thefts of a few roguish scholars be said to resemble the pleasures of the master of the world? Petronius, the author of the satire, is evidently a young man of spirit, who made a figure among a set of obscure debauchees, and not the consul Petronius.

Italian and English?[1] Why is it that these nations have none of the ancient poets in prose, and that we have none of them in verse? I will endeavor to assign the reason.

To surmount the difficulties that oppose us in the execution of any work constitutes no inconsiderable part of its merits. No great achievements without great labor; nor is there a nation in the world where it is more difficult to transfuse the true spirit of ancient poetry than it is in ours. The first poets formed the genius of their language. The Greeks and the Romans at first employed poetry in depicting all the sensible objects of nature. Homer describes whatever strikes the eye. The French, who have not yet begun to improve any of the more sublime kinds of poetry except the dramatic, neither could nor should describe anything that does not affect the soul. We have insensibly debarred ourselves from all those objects which other nations have ventured to portray. There is nothing that Dante does not describe after the example of the ancients. He accustomed the Italians to express

[1] Horace was translated into Italian verse by Palavicini; Virgil by Hannibal Caro; Ovid by Auguillara, and Theocritus by Ricolini. The Italians have five good translations of Anacreon. With regard to the English, Dryden has translated Virgil and Juvenal; Pope, Homer; Creech, Lucretius, etc.

Of Virgil there are three English translations besides that by Dryden, viz., Lauderdale's, Trap's, and Pitt's; and we expect soon to see a fourth complete translation of the "Æneid" by Mr. Strahan. We have also Theocritus translated by Creech, and Horace by Francis.

everything; but how could we in the present age imitate the author of the "Georgics," who particularly mentions all the instruments of agriculture? In effect we hardly know them; and our effeminate pride, bred and nourished in the bosom of that peace and luxury which we enjoy in our cities, unhappily affixes a mean idea to these rural labors, and to the description of those useful arts which the lords and legislators of the universe cultivated with their own victorious hands. Had our good poets known how to express little things with propriety, our tongue would have added that merit, which is far from being inconsiderable, to the advantage of having become the first language in the world for the charms of conversation, and the expression of sentiment. The language of the heart, and the style of the theatre have entirely prevailed; they have embellished the French tongue, but have confined its beauties within too narrow limits.

And when I say, gentlemen, that the great poets have determined the genius of languages,[1] I advance

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[1] It is impossible in a ceremonial discourse to enter into the reasons of this difficulty that attends our poetry. It proceeds from the idiom of the language; for though M. de la Motte, and several others after him, have asserted in full academy that languages have no idioms, yet it appears demonstrable that each language has its own peculiar idiom.

This idiom is its fitness to express certain ideas with propriety, and its unfitness to express others with precision. Both these peculiarities arise: 1. From the terminations of words. 2. From auxiliary verbs and participles. 3. From the greater or less number of rhymes.

nothing that is not well known to you. The Greeks did not begin to write history till four hundred years after Homer's time; and it was from that great

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4. From the length or shortness of words. 5. From the greater or less variation of cases. 6. From articles and pronouns. 7. From elisions. 8. From inversions. 9. From the quantity of syllables. And, in fine, from an infinite number of minute circumstances, which can be perceived only by those who have thoroughly studied the principles of a language. 1. The terminations of words, such as *perdre, vaincre, un coin, sucre, raste, crotte, perdu, sourdre, fief, coffre;* these harsh syllables grate on the ear, a property for which all the northern tongues are remarkable. 2. Auxiliary verbs and participles: *"Victis hostibus," "les enemis ayant été vaincus."* There are four words for two. *"Læso et invicto milite."* This is the inscription of the invalids at Berlin; were we to translate it into French, it would be *"pour les soldats qui ont été blessés et qui n'ont pas été vaincus;"* how flat and languid! Hence it appears that Latin is more popular for inscriptions than French. 3. The number of rhymes: Open a dictionary of Italian and one of French rhymes, you will always find a greater number of rhymes in the Italian; and you will further remark that in the French there are twenty low and ridiculous rhymes for two that can enter into the noble and majestic style. 4. The length and shortness of words: It is this that renders a language more or less proper for the expression of certain maxims, and the measure of certain verses. We have never been able to translate into French in one good verse: *"Quanto si mostra men tanto è più bella."* Nor have the Italians ever been able to translate into good verses: *"Tel brille au second rang, qui s'eclipse au premier." "C'est un poids bien pesant qu'un nom trop tôt fameux."* 5. The greater or less variation of cases: *Mon père, de mon père, à mon père; meus pater, mei patris, meo patri;* this is clear and distinct. 6. Articles and pronouns: *"De ipsius negotio ei loquebatur." "Con elle parlava dell'*

painter of nature that their tongue derived that superiority which it afterward obtained over all the languages of Europe and Asia. Among the Romans, Terence was the first that expressed himself with elegance and purity; and it was Dante, and after him Petrarch, who gave the Italian tongue that charming sweetness which it has ever since preserved. It is to Lope de Vega that the Spanish owes its pomp and majesty; and it was Shakespeare, rude and unpolished as he was, that infused into the English language that strength and energy which the nation has never since been able to increase, without overstraining, and, consequently, without weakening it. Whence proceeds this grand effort of poetry, by

*affaire di lui; il lui parlait de son affaire.*" No amphibology in the Latin. It is almost unavoidable in the French. We know not whether *son affaire* is that of the man who speaks, or of him to whom the speech is addressed; the pronoun *il* is cut off in the Latin, and it is that which makes the French and the Italian so flat and insipid. 7. Elisions: "*Canto l'arme pietose, e il capitano.*" We cannot say, "*Chantons la Piété et la Vertu heureuse.*" 8. Inversions: "*César cultiva tous les arts utiles;*" we cannot turn this phrase in any other manner. In Latin it can be expressed in twenty different ways: "*Cæsar omnes utiles artes coluit.*" What a surprising difference! 9. The quantity of syllables: This is the soul of harmony. The long and short syllables in the Latin form a truly musical cadence. The more of this property any language possesses, the more harmonious it is. Observe the Italian verses, and you will find that the penult is always long: *Capitano, mâno sêno, christo, acquisto.* From all these particulars we may safely conclude that every tongue has its own peculiar idiom, which men of superior parts discover first, and soon demonstrate to others, by unfolding the true genius of the language.

which it forms and finally fixes the genius of nations, and of their languages? The cause of it is evident: the first good verses, or even such as are but seemingly so, are deeply imprinted on the memory by the aid of harmonious numbers. Their bold and natural turns become familiar; and men, who are all born with a desire and capacity of imitation, insensibly acquire the same manner of expression, and even the same way of thinking with those whose daring imaginations at first got the ascendency over the minds of others. Will you not agree with me, gentlemen, when I say that the true merit and reputation of our tongue began with the author of "The Cid," and of "Cinna?"

Before him Montaigne was the only writer that engaged the attention of the few foreigners who understood the French; but Montaigne's style is neither pure, correct, accurate, nor noble. He is alike remarkable for ease and energy: he expresses great things with plainness and simplicity; and it is this simplicity with which we are charmed; we become fond of the author's character; we are pleased to find our own picture in what he says of himself; we love to converse with him, and to exchange discourse and opinions with him. I have heard many people admire the language of Montaigne; but it is his imagination that we ought to admire; the former is bold and daring, but the latter is far from being so.

Marot, who formed his language by that of Montaigne, is hardly known beyond the limits of his native country; and even among us he is chiefly

valued for some simple tales and some licentious epigrams, the merit of which consists almost always in the subject; and it was owing to our injudicious regard for this trifling merit that our language remained so long unimproved. Poems, history, and books of morality were all written in the tragic style. The judicious Despréaux says: *"Imiter de Marot l'élégant badinage."* I am inclined to think that he would have said *le naïf badinage,* were it not that this word, which is more correct, would have rendered his verse less harmonious. In fact we have no good performances but such as force their way into foreign nations, and are there studied and translated; but into what foreign language has Marot ever been translated?

Our tongue, for a long time after him, was no better than a familiar jargon, in which we were sometimes happy enough to compose some pieces of humor; but when humor is our only merit, we can never expect to be admired by other nations.

*Enfin Malherbe vint, et le premier en France*
*Fit sentir dans les vers une juste cadence,*
*D'un mot mis en sa place enseigna le pouvoir.*

At last great Malherbe came, and first taught France
the art,
To rough, unpolished verse just cadence to impart.
Of words in order placed he showed the mighty power.

If Malherbe was the first that showed what happy effects might be produced by the great art of well-placed words, and well-turned periods, he must be allowed to have been the first that was elegant. But are a few harmonious stanzas sufficient to engage

strangers to cultivate our language? They read that admirable poem, the *"Gerusalemme Liberata," "Orlando Furioso," "Pastor Fido,"* and the beautiful pieces of Petrarch: and can they rank with these masterly performances a small number of French verses, well written indeed, but feeble, and almost destitute of imagination?

Thus the French tongue would have forever remained in its former state of mediocrity, without one of those extraordinary men who are made to change and elevate the spirit of a whole nation. It was the greatest of your first academicians, it was Corneille alone, who began to make our language admired by foreigners, at the very time that Cardinal Richelieu began to cause the crown to be respected by the neighboring nations. Both of them spread our glory throughout Europe. Corneille was succeeded, I will not say by men of greater genius, but by better writers. A man arose, who was at once more animated and more correct; less varied indeed, but therefore less unequal; sometimes as sublime, and always as majestic, without running into bombast: an enemy to declamation, he spoke to the heart with more truth, and with more charms —Racine.

One of their contemporaries — Boileau — incapable perhaps of those sublime conceptions which elevate the soul, and of those delicate feelings which melt it into pity, but made to enlighten and direct those whom nature had blessed with both these qualities, laborious, severe, accurate, pure, harmonious, and who, in fine, might be said to be the poet

of reason, began unhappily by writing satires; but soon after equalled, and perhaps surpassed, Horace in his "Moral Epistles," and his "Art of Poetry." He gave precepts and examples; and was at last convinced that the art of instructing, when executed with a masterly hand, succeeds better than the art of satirizing, because satire dies with those who have been the victims of its rage; whereas reason and virtue are eternal. You had, in every branch of literature, that crowd of great men which nature produced, as in the age of Leo X. and in that of Augustus. Then it was that foreigners began to read our authors with avidity; and, thanks in part to Cardinal Richelieu, they adopted our language, as they are now eager to deck themselves with the manufactures of our ingenious artists, for which we are indebted to the labors of the great Colbert.

The late king of Sweden, a monarch admired by all men for his five victories, and still more by the learned on account of his great knowledge, chose our language for his own, and has adopted it in his court and his dominions: he spoke it with that energy and propriety which study alone can never bestow, and which is the true mark of genius. Not only did he study it: he even sometimes embellished and improved it; for great souls will always seize those happy turns and expressions which can never occur to weak minds. Stockholm is blessed with a new Christina, equal to the first in genius, superior in everything else; and she pays the same honor to our language. The French is studied at Rome, where it was formerly despised.

It has now become as familiar to the sovereign pontiff as the learned languages, in which he writes when he instructs the Christian world which he governs. Several Italian cardinals have written in French, in the Vatican, with as much elegance as if they had been born at Versailles. Your works, gentlemen, have forced their way to that capital of the most remote empire of Asia and Europe, and the most extensive in the universe; to that city, which, about forty years ago, was a desert, inhabited only by wild beasts: there your dramatic pieces are now represented; and the same good taste which introduced the Italian music into the city of Peter the Great, and of his worthy daughter, has likewise introduced your eloquence.

This honor, paid by so many nations to our excellent writers, is a proof that Europe owes to us its preservation from degeneracy. I will not say that everything is hastening toward a shameful decay; the common complaint of those satirists, who endeavor to justify their own weakness by that which they impute to the age. I own, indeed, that the glory of our arms is supported with more dignity than that of our learning; but the fire which formerly enlightened us is not yet extinct. Have not these latter years produced the only book of chronology, in which the manners of men, and the characters of courts and ages are painted with a masterly hand? A work, which, were it but dryly instructive, like so many others, would nevertheless be the best of the kind; but in which the author — M. Hénault — has found out the happy secret of

mixing pleasure with instruction; a secret attainable only by those men who are superior to their works.

The causes of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire have been demonstrated in a shorter book still, written by a bold and daring genius — Montesquieu — who goes to the bottom of every subject, while he only seems to skim on the surface. Never had we more elegant and faithful translators than at present: true philosophers have at last begun to write history. A man equally remarkable for the elegance of his style and the solidity of his judgment — Marquis de Vauvenargues — is formed amidst the tumults of war. There are several of these amiable geniuses whom Tibullus and Ovid would have considered as their disciples, and wished to have for their friends. The theatre, I confess, is threatened with a sudden fall; but, at least, I see here that truly tragic genius — M. Crébillon, author of *"Electre"* and *"Rhadamiste"* — whose example I have endeavored to follow, when I ventured to take a few steps in the same career. I view him with a mixture of sorrow and satisfaction, as we behold, on the ruins of our native country, a hero who has bravely fought in its defence. I observe several among you, who, in imitation of the great Molière, have rendered comedy a school of manners and of decency; a school which deserves as much encouragement in France as a less chaste theatre enjoyed at Athens. If that celebrated author who first adorned philosophy with all the graces of poetry

belongs to a more remote age, he is still the honor and the consolation of yours.

Great talents must always be rare, especially when the taste and genius of a nation are formed. It is then with men of letters as it is with forests, where the trees, crowded together, and reared up, will not suffer anyone to raise its head above the rest. When commerce is in a few hands, some people make prodigious fortunes, while the greater number remain poor; but when commerce is more widely diffused, wealth becomes general, and great fortunes are rare. We have, gentlemen, a great deal of genius in France, and that is the very reason why we shall find for the future very few superior geniuses.

But, notwithstanding this universal improvement of the nation, I will not deny that our language, elegant as it now is, and fixed, as one would imagine it ought to be, by so many excellent performances, may nevertheless be easily corrupted. We ought to apprise strangers that it already loses much of its purity in almost all the books composed in the United Provinces — that famous republic, which has been so long our ally, and in which the French is the prevailing language, notwithstanding the factions that oppose France. But if it is corrupted in that country by a mixture of idioms, it is in danger of being corrupted among ourselves by a mixture of different styles. Whatever vitiates the taste of a nation will, in the end, vitiate its language. Some writers endeavor to enliven the most serious and instructive works, by familiar and colloquial expressions. Some introduce the burlesque style of Marot

into the most noble subjects; which is much the same absurdity as if they were to dress a prince in the garb of a harlequin. Some make use of new terms, which are entirely useless, and should never be hazarded but when they are absolutely necessary. There are several other faults, with which I am the more sensibly affected, because I have fallen into some of them myself. But, to preserve me from such errors for the future, I shall find among you, gentlemen, those assistances which my learned predecessor acquired by his studies. Intimately acquainted with the works of Cicero, he had thence derived this advantage, that he studied to speak the French language with as much purity as that consul spoke the Latin. But it belongs to that gentleman, who has made the works of that great orator his particular study, and was the friend of the president Bouhier, to revive among us the eloquence of the one, and to display to you the merit of the other. To-day he has a double task to perform: he has a friend to lament and celebrate, and a friend to receive and encourage. He may tell you with more eloquence than I, but not with more sensibility, what charms friendship gives to the labors of men devoted to the study of letters; how it serves to conduct, correct, excite, and solace them; and how it inspires the soul with that pleasing and agreeable composure without which we can never be master of our own ideas.

In this manner it was that the Academy was at first formed. It has an origin still more noble than that which it received from Cardinal Richelieu; it

took its first rise in the bosom of friendship. Men united by this respectable tie, and by their common taste for the fine arts, met together, without aspiring to fame: they were less illustrious than their successors, but not less happy. Decency, candor, concord, and sound criticism, which is so opposite to satire, inspired their meetings. The same virtues and good qualities will always animate yours: they will be the constant pursuit of men of letters; and will serve, perhaps, to reform those who make themselves unworthy of the name. The true lovers of the arts are always friends. Who has a better right to say so than I? I would take the liberty, gentlemen, to enlarge on the instances of friendship with which most of you have been pleased to honor me, were it not that I am bound in duty to forget my own private concerns, in order to talk of the great object of all your labors, of those interests before which all others should vanish; I mean the glory of the nation.

I know that panegyric, unless it is managed with the greatest delicacy, is a very nauseous and disagreeable subject; I know that the public, ever fond of novelty, imagines that every topic of praise is already exhausted on your founder and protectors. But should I refuse the debt I owe, because those who have paid it before me have left me nothing new to say on the subject? It is with these panegyrics, which are so frequently repeated, as with public solemnities, which are always the same, and which revive the memory of events dear to a whole people: they are necessary. To celebrate such men

as Cardinal Richelieu and Louis XIV., to praise a Séguier, a Colbert, a Turenne, and a Condé, what is it but to cry aloud: "Ye kings, ye ministers, and ye generals, in times to come, imitate these great men?" Is it not well known that Trajan's panegyric excited Antoninus to the study and practice of virtue? And does not Marcus Aurelius, the greatest man and the greatest emperor that ever lived, confess, in his writings, the spirit of emulation with which the virtues of Antoninus filled him? When Henry IV. heard the appellation of "Father of his People" given to Louis XII. in parliament, he felt himself inspired with an ambition of imitating him, and he actually surpassed him.

Do you think, gentlemen, that the honors paid by so many mouths to the memory of Louis XIV. had not a strong influence on the mind of his successor from his earliest youth? It will one day be said, that both of them attained to immortality, sometimes by the same, and sometimes by different roads. Both will be equal in this respect, that they never disburdened themselves of the load of public affairs, but out of gratitude to good ministers; and this circumstance, perhaps, will constitute their greatest glory. Posterity will say that both of them loved justice, and commanded their armies. The one sought, by the most noble achievements, the glory which he so well deserved: he called her to him from the height of his throne; and she was his constant attendant in all his conquests, and in all his enterprises, till at last she filled the world with his name. He displayed a great soul, as well in

adversity as prosperity, in the field, in his palace, and in all the courts of Europe and of Asia. The sea and the land bore witness to his power; and the most inconsiderable objects had no sooner acquired a connection with him, than they presently assumed a new character, and received the stamp of his grandeur. The other protects kings and emperors, subdues provinces, and interrupts the course of his conquests to go and relieve his subjects; to which godlike office he flies from the bosom of death, whose fatal stroke he had hardly escaped. He obtains victories, and performs the most noble exploits with such an ease and unconcern as would make us imagine that what strikes other men with astonishment is to him only in the ordinary and common course of nature. He conceals the greatness of his soul, without endeavoring to conceal it; but is not able to weaken those rays of majesty, which piercing, in spite of all his endeavors to the contrary, the veil of his modesty, thence derive a more durable lustre.

Louis XIV. signalized himself by the most glorious achievements, by the great love he entertained for all the arts, and by the royal encouragement he so cheerfully gave them. O you, his august successor, you have already imitated his noble example; and you wait only for that peace, which you endeavor to obtain by your victories, to accomplish all your generous projects, which cannot be executed but in the bosom of quiet and tranquillity.

You began your victories in that very province where those of your great-grandfather were begun,

and you have already extended them to a greater distance. He lamented that, in the course of his glorious campaigns, he could not oblige an enemy worthy of such a noble antagonist, to engage with him in a pitched battle. That glory, which he so ardently desired, you have enjoyed. Happier than the great Henry, who hardly gained any victories but over his own subjects, you have conquered the eternal and intrepid enemies of your crown. Your son, next to you the object of our prayers and our dread, learned at your side to behold danger and misfortune without being troubled, and the most glorious triumph without being dazzled. When we were trembling for you in Paris, you were in a field of carnage. Composed in those moments of horror and confusion, composed amidst the tumultuous joy of your victorious troops, you embraced that general — the late Count de Saxe — who only wished to live that he might see you triumph; that man, whom your virtues and his own conspired to make your subject, and whom France will ever number among her dearest and most illustrious children. You rewarded, by your approbation and praises, all those who had contributed to the victory; and this reward is the most glorious that Frenchmen can receive.

But what will forever be preserved in the annals of the Academy, and must afford the greatest satisfaction to each of you, gentlemen, is, that one of your fellow-members performed the most important service to your protector, and to France, in that glorious battle. He it was who after having run

from rank to rank, and after having fought in so many different places, flew to give and to execute that advice that was so seasonable, so salutary, and so readily embraced by the king, whose penetrating eye discerned everything in those moments when the mind is most apt to wander. Enjoy, gentlemen, enjoy the pleasure of hearing in this assembly the very words which your protector said to the marshal, Duke de Richelieu, — the nephew of your founder — on the field of battle: "I shall never forget the important service you have done me." But if this glory be so dear to you, how dear must be to all France, and how dear will one day be to Europe in general, those pacific steps which Louis XV. took after his victories! He still pursues the same measures; he never attacks his enemies, but in order to disarm them; he does not desire to conquer them, but in order to make them agree to reasonable terms of accommodation. Did they but know the real sentiments of his heart, they would make him their arbiter, instead of their enemy; and that, perhaps, would be the only method of gaining advantages over him. The virtues which render him such a formidable foe they have fully experienced, from the time of his assuming the command of his armies; but those which ought to engage their trust and confidence, and ought to be the bond of union among different nations, require a longer time to be discovered by an enemy.

We, in this respect more happy, have known the goodness of his heart from the moment of his mounting the throne. We have thought of him as

all ages and all nations will ever think. Never was love more sincere or more emphatically expressed than ours. All our hearts felt its force, and your eloquent mouths were the interpreters of our inward feelings. Medals, worthy of the most illustrious times of Greece, eternize his triumphs and our happiness. May I behold in our public places this humane monarch, carved by the hands of our Praxiteleses, and environed with all the symbols of public happiness! And may I read at the feet of his statue those words which are already in all our hearts: "To the Father of his Country!"

## A FUNERAL EULOGIUM BY VOLTAIRE,

### ON THE OFFICERS WHO DIED IN THE WAR OF 1741.

A PEOPLE who set an example of everything good and great to all the other nations of the earth, who taught them all the arts, and even the art of war, the masters of the Romans, who have been our masters, the Greeks, I mean, among their excellent institutions, which are still the object of our admiration, established the custom of consecrating by funeral eulogiums the memory of those citizens who had shed their blood in the service of their country: a custom worthy of Athens; worthy of a brave and humane nation, and worthy of us! Why then should we not follow such a noble precedent — we who have so long, and in so many respects, been the happy rivals of that illustrious nation? Why confine ourselves to the servile custom of celebrating after their death none but those who, being rendered conspicuous in the world by their exalted stations, have been surfeited with the incense of praise during their lives?

It is doubtless just, it is even conducive to the interests of society, to praise a Titus, a Trajan, a Louis XII., a Henry IV., and others of like character: but shall we always pay to the dignity of rank those duties which are so interesting and agreeable when they are paid to the merit of the person; those duties, which are so vain when they are only a necessary part of the funeral pomp; when the

heart is not affected; when the vanity of the orator speaks to the vanity of the audience; and when in a set discourse, and in forced divisions, we exhaust our own invention and our hearers' patience in unmeaning eulogiums, which pass away with the smoke of the funeral lights? At least, if we must always celebrate those who have been great, let us sometimes revive the memory of those who have been useful. Happy beyond all doubt — if the voice of the living can pierce the darksome tomb — happy the magistrate, immortalized by the same organ who caused so many tears to be shed for the death of Mary of England, and who was worthy to celebrate the praises of the great Condé! But if the ashes of Michael Letellier received such signal honors, is there a good citizen that does not now ask whether the same honors have been paid to the great Colbert, to that man who diffused such an exuberance of plenty by reviving industry; who carried his extensive views to the extremities of the globe; who rendered France the mistress of the seas, and to whom we owe a grandeur and felicity long unknown?

O ye immortal shades! O ye names of those happy few who have served the state with fidelity, be ye ever held in grateful remembrance; but especially perish not entirely, ye warriors, who have died in our defence. It was by your blood that we purchased our victories: it was upon your mangled and panting bodies that your fellow-soldiers advanced to the enemy, and mounted so many ramparts: it is to you we owe a glorious peace, the price

of your destruction. The more war is considered as a dreadful scourge, comprehending all manner of crimes and calamities, the more sincere should be our gratitude to these, our brave countrymen, who have died to give us that happy peace which ought to be the only end of war, and the sole object of ambition to a wise monarch.

Weak and foolish mortals as we are, who reason so wisely on our various duties, who make such profound researches into the nature of our own constitution, and into the sources of our frailties and calamities, we make our temples perpetually resound with our reproaches and condemnations; we anathematize the slightest irregularities of conduct, and the most secret indulgences of the heart: we thunder against vices and against faults, blamable indeed, but which hardly disturb the peace of society. But what voice, commissioned to teach virtue, has ever been raised against this crime, which is so great and so universal: against that destructive rage which transforms into beasts of prey men who were born to live like brothers; against those barbarous depredations and shocking cruelties which make the earth a scene of robbery and desolation, and convert flourishing and populous cities into horrid and gloomy tombs? The violation of treaties the most sacred and solemn, the grossness of those impostures which precede the horrors of war; the impudence of those calumnies which fill the declarations of the contending parties; the infamy of those rapines which are capitally punished in private men, but extolled as acts of heroism in the leaders of nations;

theft, robbery, sacking of cities, bankrupts, and the ruin of thousands of wealthy merchants; their families wandering from place to place, and in vain begging alms at the gates of publicans enriched with their spoils; these are a few of the many crimes and calamities that are the constant concomitants of war; and yet these crimes are committed without the least remorse; and the ministers of the Gospel thunder in their pulpits against the dress of the ladies, and against the exhibition of plays, which are not only innocent but useful.

From the banks of the Po to those of the Danube they bless in the name of the same God, the colors under which march thousands of mercenary murderers who, from a spirit of lewdness, debauchery, and rapine, have left their native fields. They go and change their masters: they expose themselves to an infamous punishment for the sake of the most trifling advantage. The day of battle comes; and the soldier, who had hardly ranged himself under the colors of his country, frequently sheds without remorse the blood of his fellow-citizens. He impatiently waits for the moment when, in the field of slaughter, he may tear from the dying some wretched spoils, which are snatched from himself by other hands. Such is too often the soldier; such is that blind and savage multitude which is employed to change the fate of empires, and to raise the monuments of glory. Viewed in one collective body, and marching under the command of a great captain, they form the most august and the most charming spectacle in the world. Taken separately, and in the

excesses of drunkenness and brutal debauchery — if you except a small number — they are the dregs of nations.

Such is not the officer; jealous of his own honor and of that of his sovereign; braving death in cold blood, though possessed of every advantage that can make him in love with life; cheerfully quitting the pleasures of society for the dangers that make nature tremble; humane, generous, and compassionate, while barbarity rages all around him; born for the sweets of society, as well as for the dangers of war; equally polite and brave, he is frequently adorned with learning, and still more by the graces of the mind. Such is the character which foreigners give our officers: they confess more particularly, that when the too ardent heat of youth is tempered by a little experience, they make themselves beloved even by their enemies. But if their graceful and open behavior has been sometimes able to soften the most barbarous minds, what has not their valor performed?

These are they who defended for so many months the capital of Bohemia, conquered by their hands in so short a time; they who attacked and even besieged their besiegers; who fought such long battles in their trenches; who braved the enemy, hunger, death, and the uncommon severity of the season, in that memorable march, not so long indeed as that of the Greeks under Xenophon, but as painful and as hazardous. We have seen them, under the conduct of a general equally brave and vigilant, precipitate their enemies from the top of the Alps,

victorious at once over all the obstacles which nature, art, and valor opposed to their invincible courage. Ye fields of Fontenoy, ye banks of the Scheldt and the Meuse, stained with their blood, it was on your plains that their valor brought victory to the feet of that king, whom the nations combined against him should have chosen for their arbiter! What noble exploits were performed by these heroes, the number of whom is hardly known?

In what then were the centurions and tribunes of the Roman legions their superiors? In what did they excel them, if it was not, perhaps, in their invariable love of military discipline? The ancient Romans, it is true, eclipsed all the other nations of Europe, when Greece was sunk in effeminacy, and divided in her councils; and when other nations were as yet barbarians, destitute of good laws, knowing how to fight, but ignorant of the art of war, incapable of uniting their joint efforts against the common foe; without commerce, without arts, and without every resource that would enable them to preserve their liberties. No nation has ever equalled the ancient Romans. But Europe, taken together, in its present condition, is greatly superior to that conquering and legislative people, whether we consider the many branches of knowledge that have been brought to perfection, or the many new discoveries that have been made; whether we survey that extensive and advantageous commerce which unites both worlds, or those rich and flourishing cities raised in places which under the consuls and Cæsars were no better than barren deserts; whether we cast

our eyes on those numerous and disciplined armies which defend twenty kingdoms blessed with a regular government, or endeavor to pierce the veil of that policy, ever deep and ever active, which holds the balance among so many nations. In a word, that spirit of jealousy itself which reigns among the moderns, which excites their genius, and animates their labors, serves to raise Europe to a pitch of grandeur greatly superior to what we admire in ancient Rome, without being either able or willing to resemble it.

But is there a nation in the world that can boast of containing such a number of excellent officers as ours? Sometimes, in other countries, men enter into the service in order to make their fortunes; among us they throw away their fortunes for the mere pleasure of serving: elsewhere they sell their blood to foreign masters; here they burn with the desire of sacrificing their lives for their king: there they march because they are paid; here they fly to death, in order to obtain the approbation of their master; and honor has always done greater things than interest.

In speaking of such noble exploits and such glorious actions, we frequently dispense with the tribute of gratitude, by saying that ambition was the spring of all. But this is the logic of the ungrateful. They who serve us, I own, would wish to rise in the service; yes, they are animated by that noble ambition, without which there would never be a great man. And indeed if they had not in their eyes those grand objects that redouble the love of their duty, they

would be but poorly recompensed by the public, who, though they are sometimes warm and even precipitate in their praises, are always more apt to censure; passing from enthusiasm to indifference, and from indifference to forgetfulness.

Sybarites, as we are, who live at ease in our flourishing cities, employed in the refinements of luxury, become insensible to everything, and even to pleasure itself, through an excess of indulgence; tired with those daily diversions, the least of which would have charmed our ancestors, and satiated with continual repasts, more delicious than the feasts of kings; amidst so many pleasures, at once so accumulated and so little enjoyed; surrounded by so many arts and finished performances, so perfect and so neglected; intoxicated and lulled to sleep, as it were, in the bosom of peace and self-conceit, we hear the news of a battle; we awake from our pleasing lethargy to ask with eagerness the particulars that are talked of at random, to censure the general, to diminish the loss of the enemy, and to magnify our own. Meanwhile, five or six hundred families in the kingdom are either bathed in tears or filled with the most dreadful apprehensions. They groan, and retiring into the most secret parts of their houses, demand from heaven their brothers, their husbands, and their children. The peaceful inhabitants of Paris repair in the evening to the theatre, whither they are drawn by custom, rather than by inclination; and if at the repast, which succeeds the play, they happen to talk of the deceased with whom they were acquainted, they do it sometimes with indiffer-

ence; sometimes by reviving the memory of their faults, when they ought only to remember their loss; or even sometimes by exercising that easy and mischievous talent of malicious wit against them, as if they were still living.

But when we hear that a reverse of fortune, such as the greatest commanders have in all ages experienced, has retarded the progress of our arms, we are then thrown into the deepest despair; we then put on the appearance of fear, without feeling the least real apprehension. Our bitter reproaches persecute, even in the grave, the general whose days have been cut short in an unsuccessful engagement. But do we know what were his designs, and his resources, or can we, from our gilded rooms, which we have hardly ever left, discern, with a glance of the eye, the particular spot on which he fought? He whom you accuse may have erred; but he died fighting for you. What! Shall our books, our schools, and our historical declamations, incessantly repeat the name of a Cinegerus, who, having lost his arms in seizing a Persian bark, endeavored in vain to hold it with his teeth? And shall we blame our countryman, who lost his life in snatching in the same manner, the palisades of the enemy's intrenchments at the battle of Exilles, when he was no longer able to seize them with his wounded hands?

Let us not fill our minds with these examples of antiquity, oftentimes too slightly proved, and greatly exaggerated; but let us reserve some room, at least, for those instances of heroism, whether successful or unsuccessful, which our fellow-citizens have

given. Was not the young Brienne, who, on having his arm broken at the battle of Exilles, mounted the ladder, crying: "I have another left for my king and my country," equal to a native of Latium or Attica? Should not all those who, like him, advanced to meet the death they could not give to their enemies, be dearer to us than the ancient warriors of a foreign land? Did not they merit a hundred times more praise, and acquire more glory by dying under the inaccessible bulwarks, than their enemies did in defending themselves with safety, and in killing them without difficulty or danger?

What shall I say of those who died at the battle of Dettingen; a battle so well planned, and so ill conducted, and in which the general needed only to be obeyed, in order to put an end to the war? Among those whose unsuccessful valor and untimely death history shall celebrate, shall we forget a young Bouflers, a child of ten years of age, who having a leg broken in that battle, caused it to be cut off, and died without complaint? — an instance of fortitude rarely to be found among warriors, and the only one ever given by a boy of that age!

If we turn our eyes to actions not more brave indeed, but more fortunate, how many heroes do we find whose names and achievements ought forever to be in our mouths! How many countries sprinkled with the noblest blood, and famous for the most glorious victories! There were raised against us a hundred bulwarks, which are now no more. What has become of those fortifications of Freiburg, bathed with blood, tottering under their defenders,

and surrounded with the lifeless bodies of the besiegers? We still see the ramparts of Namur, and those castles which make the astonished traveller cry: "How could they reduce this fortress which touched the clouds!" We still behold Ostend, which formerly sustained sieges of three years' continuance, and which in five days surrendered to our victorious arms. Every plain, every city in these countries is a monument of our glory; but what has this glory cost!

O ye happy peoples, give, at least, to your countrymen who have died the victims of this glory, or who still survive a part of themselves, the rewards which their ashes or their wounds demand. If you refuse them this boon, the trees, the fields of Flanders will assume a voice, and tell you, it was there that the modest and intrepid Luttaux, laden with years, and exhausted by a long service, wounded already in two places, weak, and losing blood, cried out: "We must not now think of preserving life; we must endeavor to render the remains of it useful;" and leading back to the combat the dispersed troops, received the mortal blow which brought him at last to the grave. It was there that the colonel of the French guards, going to reconnoitre the enemy, was the first that perished in that bloody battle, and expired offering prayers for his king and his country. At a greater distance died Marquis de Fénelon, the nephew of the famous archbishop of Cambray, the inheritor of the virtues of that excellent man, who rendered virtue truly amiable.

How justly then did the posts of the fathers

become the inheritance of the sons! Who could feel the least spark of envy, when, on the ramparts of Tournay, one of those subterranean thunders which baffle the efforts of valor, and elude the precautions of prudence, having carried away the bloody and scattered limbs of the colonel of Normandy, the regiment was given the same day to his son, and that invincible body was hardly sensible of having changed its leader. Thus that foreign troop, which has become so national, and which bears the name of Dillon, has seen sons and brothers rapidly succeed their fathers and brothers, who fell in battle. Thus the brave d'Aubeterre, the only colonel killed at the siege of Brussels, was replaced by his courageous brother. Why was it necessary that death should deprive us of him likewise?

The government of Flanders, that eternal theatre of war, has justly fallen to the share of the duke de Boufflers, the warrior who exposed his life so frequently in one day at the battle of Rocoux. His father marched by his side at the head of his regiment, and taught him to command and to conquer. Death, who respected this generous and tender parent in the battle of Rocoux, where he was continually hovering around him, waited for him in Genoa under a different form: there he perished, grieving that he could not shed his blood on the bastions of the besieged city: but with the consolation of leaving Genoa free, and carrying with him to the grave the title of its deliverer.

Wherever we turn our eyes, whether to that city delivered from oppression, or to the Po, and the

Ticino, to the top of the Alps, or to the banks of the Scheldt, the Meuse, and the Danube, we everywhere behold actions worthy of immortality, or deaths which deserve our eternal lamentations.

We must be stupid not to admire such heroic achievements, and barbarous not to be affected with the melancholy scenes they occasion. Let us put ourselves for a moment in the place of a fearful spouse, embracing in her children the image of her young husband, whom she tenderly loves; while the warrior, who had sought danger on so many occasions, and had been wounded so frequently, marches against the enemy, in the suburbs of Genoa, at the head of his brave troop; that man who, after the example of his family, at once cultivated the study of letters and the art of war, and whose genius was equal to his valor, receives the fatal blow he had so long sought: he dies: at this news the disconsolate half of himself faints away in the midst of her children, who are not yet capable of being sensible of their loss. Here a mother and a wife resolve to set out for Flanders, to succor the count de Froulai, a young hero, whose wisdom and valor, greater than his years, justly procured him the affection of the dauphin, and seemed to promise him a glorious life; but while they are flattering themselves with the agreeable hopes of preserving his life by their tender care, they are told that he is dead. What a moment! What a fatal blow to the daughter of an unfortunate emperor, passionately fond of her husband — the count de Bavière — who is her only consolation, her only hope in a foreign country, to

be told: " Never more will you see the tender spouse for whom alone you desire to live! "

A mother flies, without stopping, into Flanders, amidst the cruel agonies into which she is thrown by the wound of her young son, the marquis de Ségur. Already had she seen in the battle of Rocoux his body pierced and torn with one of those terrible wounds which leave the survivor only a languishing life: this time she thinks herself too happy: she returns thanks to heaven on seeing her son deprived only of an arm, when she trembled with the apprehension of finding him in his grave.

In this review let us neither follow the order of time nor that of our exploits and losses. Our feelings disdain the confinement of rules. I transport myself to the fields in the neighborhood of Augsburg, where the father of the young warrior of whom I am now speaking saved the remains of our army, and delivered them from the pursuit of the enemy, whom numbers and treachery rendered greatly superior. But in the execution of this difficult task, we lost the last branch of the house of Rupelmonde; that officer so learned and so amiable, who had studied the art of war with the most profound attention, and who joined intrepidity of soul, solidity of judgment, and brilliancy of wit to the most polite and engaging address: he leaves a wife and a mother worthy of such a son, bathed in tears and plunged into a state of the deepest melancholy and dejection.

Now ye scornful and trifling minds, who lavish your insulting and misplaced raillery on all that

softens the noble and tender heart; ye who, in the striking events which determine the fate of kingdoms, seek only to distinguish yourselves by those puns and jests which you call wit, and who, on that account, pretend to a kind of superiority in the world, exert here, if ye dare, the despicable efforts of a weak and barbarous imagination; or rather, if ye have the least spark of humanity, join in the common grief, and mingle your tears with those of the public. But are ye worthy to weep?

Let not those especially, who have been the sharers of so many dangers, and the witnesses of so many losses, contract in the voluptuous indolence of our cities, and in the lightness of conversation, that habit to which our nation is so much addicted, of diffusing an air of ridicule and derision on all that is most glorious in life, and most terrible in death. Would they be so foolish as thus to degrade themselves, and to tarnish what it is to their interest to honor?

Let those who employ their whole time in reading our empty and ridiculous romances; let those whose bad taste can be pleased only with those puerile thoughts, more false than delicate, with which we are daily surfeited, disdain the simple tribute of sorrow that springs from the heart: let them tire of these true pictures of our grandeur and our losses, these sincere eulogiums given to names and virtues unknown to them; I will nevertheless continue to strew flowers on the tombs of our defenders; I will raise my feeble voice, and cry: "Here was cut off, in the bloom of life, that young warrior, whose

brothers fight under our standards, and whose father protected the arts at Florence, under a foreign dominion. There was pierced with a mortal wound the marquis de Beauvau, his cousin, when the worthy grandson of the great Condé forced the city of Ypres to surrender." Tormented with incredible pain, and surrounded by our soldiers, who disputed with each other the honor of carrying him off, he said to them in a dying voice, "My friends, go where your presence is necessary; go and fight, and leave me to die by myself." Who can sufficiently praise his frank and noble behavior, his social virtues, his knowledge, his love of learning, and that judicious taste for ancient monuments, which died with him? Thus perished by a violent death, and in the flower of their age, a number of men, from whom their country expected to derive the greatest glory and advantage; while the useless incumbrances of the earth, grown old in laziness, amuse themselves in our gardens, and take a pleasure in being the first to relate the news of these calamitous events.

O fate! O destiny! our days are numbered: the moment eternally fixed arrives, and annihilates all our projects, and all our hopes. The count de Bissy, ready to receive the honors which are so greatly desired, even by those on whom honors are accumulated, runs from Genoa to Maestricht, and the last fire from the ramparts deprives him of life: he was the last victim that was sacrificed, and fell at the very moment which heaven had prescribed to put an end to so much bloodshed. O war! thou who

hast filled France with glory, and with sorrow, thou dost not strike solely by those sudden blows which bring destruction in a moment! How many citizens, how many of our friends and relatives have been ravished from us by a slow death, occasioned by the fatigue of long marches, and the severity of the seasons!

Thou art now no more, O sweet hope of the rest of my days! O my tender friend, educated in the king's invincible regiment, which has always been conducted by heroes, which signalized itself so remarkably in the trenches of Prague, in the battle of Fontenoy, and in that of Lawfeld, where it decided the victory! The retreat from Prague, for the space of thirty leagues, and through roads covered with ice, cast into thy bosom the seeds of death, which my sad eyes afterward saw unfolded: familiarized to the view of death, thou beheldest him approach with that indifference which the ancient philosophers endeavored either to acquire or to assume. Racked by pain, both within and without, deprived of sight, and every day losing a part of thyself, nothing but the most extraordinary degree of virtue could have prevented thy being miserable; and yet this virtue sat so easily upon thee that it seemed to cost thee no trouble. I have always seen thee the most unfortunate and the most composed of mankind. The world would never have known the great loss it has sustained in thy death, had not a man, equally remarkable for his humanity and eloquence, composed thy eulogium, in a work consecrated to friendship, and embellished with charms of the most

moving poetry. I am not surprised, that, amidst the tumults of war, thou didst cultivate the study of letters and of wisdom: these examples are not rare among us. If those who had only the ostentation of merit could never impose upon thee; if those who, even in the tender intercourse of friendship, are guided only by the motives of vanity, provoked thy indignation, there were nevertheless some noble and ingenuous minds which resembled thine own. If the elevation of thy thoughts would not suffer thee to stoop to the perusal of licentious performances, the transient delight of giddy youth, who are rather pleased with the subject than the execution; if thou didst despise that mass of books produced by bad taste; if those who endeavor only to be smart and witty appeared to thee in such a mean and contemptible light; thou didst possess this solidity of judgment in common with those who always maintain the cause of reason against that inundation of bad taste, which seems to threaten us with a speedy decay. But by what prodigy didst thou acquire, at the age of twenty-five, the knowledge of true philosophy, and the talent of true eloquence? How wast thou able to soar so high, in an age of folly and trifling? And how did the simplicity of infant bashfulness cover the depth and strength of thy genius! I shall long remember, with sorrow, the value of thy friendship, the charms of which I had hardly begun to taste: it was not that vain friendship which springs from the participation in vain pleasures, which vanishes with them, and of which we have always reason to repent; but it was that steady and

rational friendship, which, of all the virtues, is the most uncommon. It was thy loss that first put into my heart the design of paying some honor to the ashes of so many defenders of the state, that I might likewise raise a monument to thine. My heart, filled with the remembrance of thee, naturally sought for this consolation, without foreseeing to what use this discourse might be destined, nor how it would be received by the malignity of mankind, who commonly, indeed, spare the dead, but sometimes, however, insult their ashes, especially when it can serve as a fresh pretext for tearing the living in pieces.

June 1, 1748.

N. B.—The young man whose death is here so justly lamented, is M. de Vauvenargues, who was long a captain in the king's regiment. I know not whether I am mistaken, but I imagine the reader will find, in the second edition of his book, more than a hundred thoughts which plainly show him to have been a youth of the most amiable disposition, deeply skilled in philosophy, and entirely free from all spirit of party and faction.

The following maxims are submitted to the consideration of the judicious:

"We are more frequently deceived by reason than by nature."

"If the passions lead us oftener astray than the judgment, it is for the same reason that rulers commit more faults than private men."

"Great thoughts flow from the heart." (In this

manner, without knowing it, he drew his own character.)

"The conscience of the dying reproaches his life."

"Fortitude or timidity, at the hour of death, depends on the last sickness."

I would advise the reader to peruse the following maxims with great care, and to endeavor to explain them:

"The thought of death deceives us; for it makes us forget to live."

"Of all kinds of philosophy, that is the most false which, under the pretence of freeing men from the dominion of the passions, advises them to live in a state of listless indolence."

"We owe, perhaps, to the passions the greatest advantages of a mental nature."

"What does not hurt the interests of society does not belong to the cognizance of justice."

"Whoever is more severe than the laws is a tyrant."

It is evident, methinks, from these few maxims, that we cannot say of him what one of the most amiable geniuses of the present age has said of these party-philosophers, of these new stoics, who have imposed their doctrines on the ignorant:

*Ils ont eu l'art de bien connaître*
*L'homme qu'ils ont imaginé,*
*Mais ils n'ont jamais deviné*
*Ce qu'il est, ni ce qu'il doit être.*

They studied and presented man,
As their own brains had formed the creature;

> But all their art could never scan
> The genuine workmanship of Nature.

I do not know that any of those who have undertaken the instruction of mankind have ever written anything more sensible than his chapter on "Natural and Moral Evil." I do not pretend to say that everything is equally good in this book; but, if my judgment is not warped by the influence of friendship, I hardly know any book that is more proper to form a well-disposed and teachable mind. What further confirms me in the opinion of the excellence of this work, which M. de Vauvenargues has left behind him is, that I have seen it despised by those who love nothing but false wit and quaint expressions.

## THE "ANTI-LUCRETIUS"
### OF CARDINAL DE POLIGNAC.

After reading the whole of the late Cardinal de Polignac's poem, I was confirmed in the opinion I had entertained of it, when his excellency did me the honor to read me the first canto. It is a matter of great surprise how anyone, in the midst of so many and so troublesome avocations, should have had either leisure or inclination to compose so long a work in verse, and in a foreign language, when, at the same time, he was not capable of writing four good lines of poetry in his own tongue. He appears to me to have united the fire of Lucretius with the elegance of Virgil; I especially admire in him that extreme ease with which he always expresses the most difficult things.

His "Anti-Lucretius" may perhaps be somewhat too loose, and want that variety which generally pleases; but in this place I examine it as a philosopher, not as a poet. I cannot but think that so noble a soul as his should have done more justice to the morals of Epicurus, who, though undoubtedly a very bad natural philosopher, was nevertheless a good man, and carefully taught the principles of benignity, temperance, moderation, and justice; virtues which he rendered still more amiable by his example than his precepts.

And yet we find this great man thus called upon in the "Anti-Lucretius," Book i, v. 524:

*Si virtutis eras avidus, etc.*

But Epicurus might, with great justice, have made the cardinal the following reply: "Had it been my happy lot, as it was yours, to have known the true God; had I, like you, been born in a pure and holy faith; I should certainly never have rejected the revelations of this God whose doctrine was unknown to my understanding, although my heart avowed its moral principles. I never could admit a belief in the deities, such as they were revealed to me by the pagan religion. I had too enlightened a reason to adore deities, who were born of a father and mother, like mortals, and made war against each other. I was too much of a lover of virtue not to detest a religion that at one time encouraged the commission of sin by the example of the gods themselves, and at another sold for money the remission of the most flagrant and unnatural crimes. On the one hand, I beheld mankind in general deformed with vice, and endeavoring to render themselves pure in the sight of deities as impure as themselves; while, on the other, I beheld a set of designing men, who boasted in justifying the most wicked actions, either by initiating those who committed them into the holy mysteries, or by dropping on them the blood of heifers, or by plunging them in the waters of the Ganges. I saw the most unjust wars undertaken with a show of religion, if the liver of a victim happened to be without a blemish, or a woman, with dishevelled hair and a distracted countenance, uttered certain words which neither herself nor any of the bystanders understood. In a word, I saw the whole earth

stained with the blood of human victims, which the high priests poured out in sacrifices to the barbarous deities. I gloried in the abhorrence I showed to such a religion. Mine was that of virtue: I invited my disciples to withdraw themselves from any commerce with a world that was so badly governed. A true Epicurean was a mild, moderate, just, and amiable being, who gave offence to no community of people, and who never kept paid executioners to murder, in the face of the world, those who did not happen to think as he did. How inconsiderable then is the difference between your religion and mine! I overturned the worship of false gods; and, had I lived when you did, I should have acknowledged the true one."

Nearly in this manner might Epicurus have endeavored to justify his errors: he might even claim a right to pardon for having opposed the immortality of the soul, by saying: "I am to be pitied, rather than condemned, for having opposed a truth which God did not think proper to reveal till five hundred years after my death. I thought in the same manner with all the lawgivers of the heathen world, who were equally ignorant of the truth as myself."

I could therefore have wished that Cardinal de Polignac had lamented Epicurus for his error, at the same time that he condemned him; and such a turn of thought was by no means incompatible with the beauties of poetry.

With regard to natural philosophy, it appears to me that the author has wasted much time, and

many good verses, in refuting the declension of atoms, and other absurdities with which the poem of Lucretius swarms. This is like levelling a cannon against an ant-hill. Besides, what reason could he have for combating the dreams of Lucretius, only to substitute those of Descartes in their place?

Cardinal de Polignac has, in the course of his poem, introduced some very beautiful verses upon the discoveries of the great Newton; but, unhappily for him, he there opposes demonstrated truths. The Newtonian philosophy is not to be discussed in verse; we can hardly investigate it in prose. It is founded wholly on geometry, which eludes the grasp of a poetical genius. Poetry may, indeed, embellish the outside of the system; but those who mean to dive into the truths it contains must have recourse to calculation, and not to verse.

## ON FABLE.

Some rigid persons, more severe than wise, have of late years endeavored to proscribe the ancient mythology as a collection of puerile stories, unworthy the gravity of our modern manners. It would, notwithstanding, be a melancholy affair to burn Ovid, Homer, and Hesiod, together with all our fine tapestry, our pictures, and operas: after all, there are many fables which contain more philosophy than, I fear, many of these philosophers can justly pretend to. If they grant a toleration to the familiar tales of Æsop, why fall sword in hand on those sublime fables which have been revered by mankind, whom they have instructed? They are, it is true, mixed with some things which border somewhat upon the frivolous; for what is there perfect under the sun? Yet every age will adopt Pandora's box, in the bottom of which is found consolation for all the human race; Jupiter's two vessels, which are perpetually pouring forth good and evil; Ixion embracing a cloud, at once the emblem and chastisement of an ambitious mind; and lastly, the death of Narcissus, the punishment of self-love. Can there be anything more sublime than that Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, should spring from the head of the god of gods? Can anything be more true, or more pleasing, than that the goddess of beauty should be obliged to go accompanied with graces? Do not the goddesses of the arts, all of them daughters of Memory, inform

us as well as Locke himself could, that without memory we are not capable of the smallest spark of sense? The arrows of Cupid, his blindness and his youth; Flora embraced by Zephyrus, etc.; what are they but so many sensible emblems of nature? These fables have outlived the religions by which they were consecrated; the temples and gods of Egypt, Greece, and Rome are now no more; and yet Ovid still survives. We may destroy the objects of credulity, but the instruments of pleasure will still remain; and those images, at once so true and so pleasing, will ever be the favorite delight of the mind of man. Lucretius did not believe those gods of fable; yet he has celebrated nature under the name of Venus.

> Delight of human kind, and gods above,
> Parent of Rome, propitious queen of love,
> Whose vital power air, earth, and sea supplies,
> And breeds whate'er is born beneath the skies.
> For every kind, by thy prolific might,
> Springs, and beholds the regions of the light.
>
> — Dryden.

If antiquity, plunged in darkness, had confined itself to the acknowledging a Supreme Being under those images, could we with justice have loaded it with reproaches? The mind which created the world was adored by philosophers; it governed the seas under the name of Neptune, the air under the emblem of Juno, and the fields under that of Pan; it was the god of armies under the name of Mars: they gave life and body to all the attributes: Jupiter was in truth their sole deity: that golden

chair, with which he lifted up gods and men, was a striking image of a Supreme Being, the sovereign of the universe. The vulgar, it is true, were deceived; but of what consequence are the vulgar to us?

It is a common question, how the magistrates of Greece and Rome could suffer those very deities that were worshipped in their temples to be turned into ridicule on their stages. In this we proceed on a false supposition: it was not the gods who were turned into ridicule in the theatre, but the follies and absurdities attributed to these gods by those who had corrupted the ancient mythology. The consuls and prætors were not at all offended to see the people diverted in the theatres with the story of the two Sosias; but they could never have suffered their poets to attack the worship of Jupiter and Mercury, in the presence of the people. Thus there are a thousand things which seem ridiculous to us, which are by no means so in themselves. I have seen in the theatre of a nation justly celebrated for learning and good sense, adventures which were drawn from the "Golden Legend;" shall we therefore say that this nation permits the objects of religion to be insulted? There is no danger the world would become Pagans for having seen in Paris the opera of "Proserpine," or for having seen in Rome the marriage of Psyche, painted by Raphael, in one of the pope's palaces. Fable serves to form the taste, but, at the same time, without any danger of making converts to idolatry.

The beautiful fables of antiquity have this further

advantage over history, which is, that they exhibit a morality which acts on the senses: they are so many lessons of virtue; whereas all history is but a revelation of successful crimes. In fable, Jupiter descends to punish a Lycaon and a Tantalus; but, in history, our Lycaons and our Tantaluses are the gods who sway all human affairs. Baucis and Philemon obtain their request, and their cottage is turned into a temple: our Baucis and Philemon have their porridge-pots sold by the tax-gatherers, which, in Ovid, are changed into gold and silver.

I know how capable history is of instructing us; I even know the necessity of that study; but yet it stands very much in need of some foreign aid, to be able to furnish us with the rules of a prudent and virtuous behavior. I could wish those who know nothing of politics but what they have from books, would endeavor to keep in their remembrance these verses of Corneille's:

*Les exemples récens suffiraient pour m'instruire;*
*Si par l'exemple seul on devait se conduire;*
*Mais souvent l'un se perd où l'autre s'est sauvé,*
*Et par où l'un périt un autre est conservé.*

Recent examples would suffice to instruct, if we were to direct our conduct by example only, but often one man is lost where another is saved, and what is one man's ruin is another's salvation.

Henry VIII., who tyrannized over his parliaments, his ministers, and his wives, and indeed over the purses and consciences of his people, lived and died in peace; whereas the good and brave Charles I. lost his life on a scaffold. Our admirable heroine,

Margaret of Anjou, gives battle twelve different times to the English, the subjects of her husband, but in vain. William III. expels James II. from his kingdom, in a manner, without drawing the sword. In our own days, we have seen the imperial family of Persia cut off, and aliens seat themselves on their throne. For such as look no further than events, history seems to be an accusation of providence, and those beautiful fables to be its justification. One thing is evident, which is, that in these we find the useful and the pleasing happily blended. Those who are able to contribute nothing of either are they who declaim against fables. Let us leave such folks alone to rail till they are weary; and, in the meantime, we will sometimes read Ovid, as well as Titus Livius, and Rapin Thoiras. It is good taste which gives the preference, while the contrary conduct is that of a gloomy and an ill-natured fanaticism.

*Tous les Arts sont amis, ainsi qu'ils sont divins:*
*Qui veut les séparer est loin de les connaître.*
*L'histoire nous apprend ce que sont les humains;*
*La fable ce qu'ils doivent être.*

The union of the arts is as evident as their divine origin; and he who attempts to separate them knows little of them. History teaches us what mankind are; fable what they should be.

## ON WIT.

A PERSON who had a competent knowledge of the human heart, being asked his opinion of a tragedy that was about to be performed, made answer that there was such a deal of wit in the piece that he very much doubted of its success. "What!" says one, "can that be a fault in an age in which every-one aims at being witty, and writes only to show that he is so; and in which the public applauds even the falsest thoughts, provided they are brilliant ones?" "Most assuredly; they will applaud it one day, and condemn it the next."

What is commonly called wit is sometimes a new simile, and sometimes a delicate allusion. In one place, it is the abuse of a word, which is offered to the reader under one sense, and which he is to understand in one quite different. Now it is a delicate relation between two uncommon ideas; then it is an extraordinary metaphor; a search after something that an object does not present at first sight, but that yet may be found in it; the art either of uniting two things naturally very distant, or of dividing two things which seem naturally connected, or to place them in apposition to each other; that of saying only half one's thoughts, that the reader may have the pleasure to find out the other half himself: in short, I should mention all the different ways of making our wit known, had I more of it myself: yet all these brilliants — for I do not speak of mock brilliants — are very seldom,

if ever, sufferable in a serious work, or in such as ought to interest us. The reason is, that it is then the author who appears, whereas the public desires never to see any person but the hero. Now this hero is always either in a passion or in danger. Neither danger nor passion seeks after wit. Priam and Hecuba would not have made epigrams when Troy was in flames, and their children butchered before their faces. Dido does not vent her sighs in madrigals, while running toward the funeral pile on which she is to give herself the fatal blow. Demosthenes does not make use of pretty thoughts when he is stirring up the Athenians to war; had he done so, he had been a rhetorician, or a declaimer, whereas he was a statesman.

The art of the admirable Racine is infinitely beyond what is called wit; but had Pyrrhus always expressed himself in such a style as this:

*Vaincu, chargé de fers, de regrets consumé,*
*Brûlé de plus de feux que je n'en allumai.*
*Hélas! fus-je jamais si cruel que vous l'êtes?*

A fettered captive, and a vanquished wretch,
A prey to all the pangs of heart-felt grief,
Burning with flames more fierce than those my rage
Kindled in falling Troy; say, was I e'er
So cruel, so obdurate as thou art?

Or was Orestes continually crying:

*Que les Scythes sont moins cruels qu' Hermione.*

E'en savage Scythians are more gentle far
Than is Hermione.

These two characters had never produced any effect on the audience: they would have perceived

that passion, which is real, very rarely amuses itself with such comparisons, and that there is very little connection between the flames which consumed Troy, and those of Pyrrhus; between the Scythians, who offered up human victims, and Hermione, who had no passion for Orestes. Cinna, speaking of Pompey, says:

*Le Ciel choisit sa mort, pour servir dignement,*
*D'une marque éternelle à ce grand changement;*
*Et devait cet honneur aux Mânes d'un tel homme,*
*D'emporter avec eux la liberté de Rome.*

His death was fixed on by the righteous gods,
As the most glorious mark, the surest monument,
To latest ages, of this wondrous change:
Resolved, in honor to the hero's shade,
That Roman freedom should with him expire.

This thought is certainly very splendid; there is a great deal of wit in it, and even a certain grandeur which dazzles at first sight. I am sure these verses, pronounced with that enthusiasm of expression, and the address of an able actor, could not fail of applause; but I am also sure that were the tragedy of "Cinna" to be all written in the same taste, it would not have been performed for any length of time. And, to speak the truth, why should heaven resolve to do honor to Pompey by making his countrymen slaves after his death? The contrary had been much more consistent with probability; and the name of Pompey ought rather to have endeavored to obtain of heaven the perpetuating that liberty for which we suppose he both fought and died.

What must a work, filled with such paradoxes and far-fetched thoughts, really be? How superior to all these dazzling ideas are such simple and natural verses as these?

*Cinna, tu t'en souviens, et veux m'assassiner!*
*Soyons amis, Cinna, c'est moi qui t'en convie.*

This, Cinna, thou rememberest, and wouldst kill me!
Yet we'll be friends; it is Augustus asks it.

This is by no means what is called wit; it is the sublime and the simple, in the union of which two qualities all true beauty consists.

When Antiochus, in "Rodogune," speaking of his mistress who leaves him, after having made him the base proposal to murder his mother, says:

*Elle fuit, mais en Parthe, en nous perçant le cœur.*

She flies, but, like the Parthian, flying wounds.

Antiochus is assuredly very witty; this is really composing an epigram on Rodogune; he makes a very ingenious comparison between the last words she utters on her going away, and the arrows which the Parthians, in their flight, shot back against their pursuers. But it is not his mistress' leaving him, but the proposal of killing his mother, which is shocking; whether Rodogune went or stayed, Antiochus is equally lovesick; but if she had not gone away, there would have been no room for this wretched epigram.

I have chosen to draw these examples from the best authors, on purpose that they might on that account have the greater weight. I omit pointing out the trivial points, and the playing on words,

whereof we easily discover the blemish. There is no person who does not burst out in a fit of laughter when, in the "Golden Fleece," Hypsipyle says to Medea, alluding to her enchantments:

*Je n'ai que des attraits, et vous avez des charmes.*

I have but beauty, you're possessed of charms.

Corneille found the theatre, and indeed every species of composition, infected with such puerilities, in which he very rarely indulges himself. I have no intention in this place to take notice of any strokes of wit, but such only as might be omitted elsewhere, and which are altogether faulty in the serious. We might apply to the authors who make use of them these words of Plutarch, as they are translated by Amiot, with the simplicity peculiar to him: *"Tu tiens sans propos, beaucoup de bons propos."*

I remember to have seen one of these splendid thoughts quoted as a model in many works of taste, and even in the late M. Rollin's "Treatise on Study." This passage is extracted from that beautiful funeral oration on the great Turenne, composed by Fléchier. It is true, Fléchier in this oration almost equals the sublime Bossuet, whom I have formerly called, and still do call, the eloquent person among so many elegant writers; but I am of opinion the passage I am speaking of would hardly have been made sense of by the bishop of Meaux. It is this:

*Puissances, ennemies de la France, vous vivez, et l'esprit de la charité Chrétienne m'interdit de faire aucun souhait pour votre mort, etc. Mais vous vivez: et je plains dans*

*cette chaire un vertueux Capitaine dont les intentions étaient pures, etc.*

Ye powers, enemies to France, you yet survive, and the spirit of Christian charity forbids me to form a wish for your deaths, etc. Yes, you survive, while I appear in this place to perform the mournful office of lamenting a virtuous general, whose intentions were undefiled and pure, etc.

Such an apostrophe might have been seasonable enough at Rome, in the time of the civil war after the murder of Pompey, or in London after that of Charles I., as the subject then would have related to the interests of Pompey and Charles I. But is it consistent with decency artfully to express from the pulpit a wish for the death of the emperor, the king of Spain, and the electors, and to put them in the balance with the general of a king with whom they were then at war? Ought the intentions of a captain, which could only be the serving his prince, to be compared with the political interests of crowned heads, against whom he was employed? What should we have said of a German who should have wished for the death of the king of France, because Count Merci, whose intentions were pure, happened to be killed? Why then has this passage been commended on every occasion by all the rhetoricians? The reason is, that this figure is naturally beautiful and pathetic; but they forget to examine the substance and fitness of the sentiment it contained. Plutarch would have told Fléchier: *Tu as tenu sans propos, un très beau propos.*

I return to the paradox I have been advancing; that all those glittering thoughts to which men have

given the appellation of wit, ought never to have been admitted into great works, composed for the instruction of the public, or calculated to move the passions. I would not even stick to say, they ought to be banished from our operas. Music expresses the passions, the sentiments, and the images: but what accents are able to express an epigram? Quinault has formerly been sometimes neglected, yet he was always natural.

Of all our operas, that which is the most loaded with ornaments, or rather filled with this affectation of epigram, is the *"Ballet du Triomphe des Arts,"* composed by a very worthy person, who thought always in a very delicate and ingenious manner, and who expressed himself with equal elegance; but who, by the abuse of this talent, has contributed somewhat to the downfall of letters, after those happy days under Louis XIV. In this ballad, where Pygmalion gives life to his statue, he tells her:

*Vos premiers mouvemens ont été de m'aimer.*

And your first movements were of love to me.

I remember to have heard this verse admired in my youth by certain persons. But who does not perceive that the motions of the body of the statue are here confounded with the motions of the heart, and that in no sense this phrase makes good French? But is a point a mere witticism? How is it possible a person who had so much wit should yet want sense to retrench those florid and dazzling faults? The man who despised and translated Homer, and in

his translation thought he corrected him, and who, by abridging him, thought he had made him possible to be read, takes it into his head likewise to make Homer witty. This person, while he makes Achilles seemingly reconciled to the Greeks, who are now ready to avenge his quarrel, makes the whole camp cry out:

*Que ne vaincra-t-il point? il s'est vaincu lui-même.*

He sure must conquer who subdued himself.

He must have been deeply in love with this false wit to cause an army of fifty thousand men to express themselves by a point.

This play of the imagination, these pretty turns, these conceits, these gayeties, these short smart sentences, these ingenious familiar expressions, men are so prodigal of at present, are only proper for trivial works, which are calculated for mere amusement. The part of the Louvre by Perrault is at once simple and majestic. A cabinet may admit of little ornaments. Be as witty as you please, or even as you can be, in light copies of verses, in a scene of a comedy, that is neither filled with passion, nor what we call simple nature, in a compliment, in some short novel, or in a letter in which you would communicate your good humor to your friend.

Far from finding fault with Voiture for admitting wit into his letters, I am, on the contrary, of opinion, that he is not witty enough, though he was eternally straining after it. Dancing-masters are said to make a bow with the worst grace of any

people, because they aim at doing it better than anybody else. I fancy this is exactly Voiture's case. His best letters are studied; we perceive it has cost him a great deal of labor to find out what offers itself of its own accord to Count Anthony Hamilton, to Madame de Sévigné, and to many other ladies, who write such trifles with the greatest ease, better than Voiture could with prodigious efforts. Despréaux, who ventured to compare Voiture to Horace, in his first satires, changed his opinion, after his taste had been ripened by age. I know it is of small importance to mankind whether he is or is not of an elevated genius; whether he has written only a few letters that can be called pretty, or whether all his pleasantry ought to pass for so many models. But persons who love and cultivate the arts are often particularly careful in examining what the rest of the world is apt to look on with the greatest indifference. Taste is, to the full, as necessary to us in the pursuit of literature as it is to the ladies in matters of dress; and provided we do not make our opinions a party affair, methinks we may boldly say that there are few things that can be called excellent in Voiture, and that Marot might very easily be reduced to a few pages.

I would not, from what I have said, be understood as desiring to derogate from the reputation they have acquired; on the contrary, I would endeavor to let it be known exactly by what means they have acquired the reputation they enjoy, and what those true beauties are which have, in some measure, made their faults pass uncensured. We

ought to know what is worthy our imitation, and what we ought to shun; and this is properly what ought to be the fruit of a careful study of the belles-lettres. This is the conduct Horace pursued when he examined Lucius like a true critic. Horace, by so doing, made himself enemies; but even his enemies were improved by the instructions he gave them.

This desire to shine, and to say what has been already said by others, after a new manner, is the source of novelty in expressions, as it is of far-fetched thoughts. An author who is incapable of shining by a thought, would make himself taken notice of by an expression. This is the reason why it has been lately attempted to substitute *amabilités* instead of *agrémens, négligemment* for *négligence, badiner les amours* in place of *badiner avec les amours.* There are a hundred such affected expressions. Were we to continue corrupting the language in this manner, that spoken by Bossuet, Racine, Pascal, Corneille, Boileau, and Fénelon would soon become obsolete. Why reject an expression which is in use, to make room for another signifying exactly the same thing? A new word is pardonable only when it is absolutely necessary, intelligible, and sonorous; we are under a necessity of coining such in physics: a new discovery, or a new machine demands a new term. But are there any new discoveries made in the human heart? Is there any other sublimity than that of Corneille and Bossuet? Are there any other passions besides those which have been treated by Racine, or excited by

Quinault? Is there any gospel of morality different from that of Bourdaloue?

Those who condemn our language as not being sufficiently copious, may be supposed to have met with something like sterility; but then it is in themselves: *"Rem verba sequuntur."* When we are full of any idea, when a just and warm imagination fully possesses a thought, it then issues from the brain, ready arrayed in proper expressions, in the same manner as Minerva sprang fully armed from that of Jupiter. I am sensible this simile might justly seem misplaced, at least in another work; but you will pardon it in a letter. In a word, the conclusion I draw from what has been said is, that we must not seek after either thoughts, turns, or expressions; and that art, in every great work, consists in reasoning justly, but without making use of too many arguments; in painting well, but without painting everything; in moving the passions, but without being always endeavoring to shake the soul. Here is certainly a world of good counsel; but have I always followed the doctrine I preach? Alas! no —

*Pauci, quos æquus amavit*
*Jupiter, aut ardens evexit ad æthera virtus,*
*Diis geniti potuere.*

## FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

### ON A VERY USEFUL CUSTOM WHICH PREVAILS IN HOLLAND.

It is to be wished that those who govern nations would imitate artists. As soon as it is known in London that a new stuff is made in France, they are sure to counterfeit it. Why is not a statesman equally desirous to establish in his own country a salutary law taken from a foreign nation? We have arrived, at length, at the secret of making chinaware of an equal goodness to that made in China. Let us learn the secret of imitating the good we observe practised among our neighbors, and let our neighbors profit by what they see excellent among us.

There are private persons who raise in their gardens the fruits which nature had appointed only to ripen under the line. We have a thousand wise laws, and a thousand excellent customs at our very doors; these are the fruits we ought to raise in our country; these are the trees we ought to transplant: they will thrive in every climate, and will prosper in every soil. The most salutary law, the most excellent custom, and the most useful I have ever seen is in Holland. When two persons are about to enter on a lawsuit, they are first obliged to go before a tribunal of reconciling judges, called the Peacemakers. If the parties happen to bring with them a lawyer and a counsellor, the first thing done is to send those gentlemen about their business, as we take off the wood from a fire we want to

extinguish. The Peacemakers tell the parties: "You are certainly great fools to spend your money to procure your own ruin; we will bring you to an agreement without costing you one farthing." If the rage of chicane happens to be too violent in our parties, they put them off to another day, in order that time may soften and mitigate the symptoms of their disorder; after the expiration of which time the judges summon them before them a second and a third time. If their folly is of the incurable sort, they promise them they will consent to their having their cause tried in a court of justice, in the same manner as we abandon an incurable member to the surgeon; and then the law has its course.

There is no necessity to make long declamations, or to calculate how much it would be for the advantage of humanity, were this law universally adopted. And besides, I am by no means desirous to follow the footsteps of the abbé de St. Pierre, whose projects a certain minister, and a man of sense, called "The dreams of a worthy man." I know that if a private person of integrity and good sense offers a proposal for the public good, it too often happens that he is abused or laughed at for his pains. "What meddling fellow is this," some will say, "who pretends to make us happier than we choose to be, and goes about to reform abuses by which so many people get their living?" What reply can be made to this? For my part, I know of none.

## THE PROFESSION OF LETTERS.

Your vocation, my dear Lefèvre, is too plainly marked out by nature to be able to resist it. The bee must needs make honey, the silkworm spin, M. Réaumur must dissect them, and you sing their labors. You will be a poet and a man of letters, not so much by your own choice as by that of nature. But you are much deceived in thinking that tranquillity will be your lot. The road of literature, and, above all, of genius, is yet more thorny than that of fortune. If you have the misfortune to be only an indifferent poet, which I am far from believing, there is nothing before you but repentance while you live. If you succeed, you are then sure to be surrounded with enemies; in a word, you walk on the brink of a precipice, with contempt on one hand, and hatred on the other.

"But what," you will tell me, "can it be possible I should be hated and persecuted merely for having written a good poem, a play that has had a run, or compiled a history with approbation, or for having sought to improve my own mind, or to contribute to the instruction of others?" But, admitting you have composed an excellent work, are you aware that you must abandon the repose of your study, in order to make your application to the licencer? If his way of thinking happens to differ from yours, if he chances not to be your friend's friend, if he is in the interest of your rival, or if he is your rival himself, it will be more difficult for you to obtain a

privilege, than for a man who has not the protection of the women to get a place at court. At length, after a year spent in applications and refusals, your work is printed; then it is you are obliged either to lay the Cerberuses of literature asleep, or engage them to bark in your favor. There are always three or four literary gazettes in France, as many in Holland; these are so many different factions. The booksellers, whose property these journals are, have an interest in their being satirical; and those who write in them are easily brought to humor the avarice of the bookseller, and the ill-nature of the public. Are you desirous to set these trumpets of fame sounding, do you pay your court to writers, patrons, abbés, doctors, and hawkers; all your cares will not avail, but some journalist or other will mangle your reputation. You answer him; he replies; you have a paper war carried on before the public, who condemns both parties alike to ridicule.

The matter is still worse if you happen to write for the stage; you begin with appearing before the areopagus of a score of pleaders, a body whose profession, though both useful and diverting, is, notwithstanding, sullied by the unjust but irrevocable cruelty of the public. This unhappy state of contempt in which they are, irritates them. In you they behold a client, and lavish on you all that contempt with which they themselves are covered. You await your doom from them; they sit in judgment on your merits; and, at length, undertake to perform your piece. One foolish wit in the pit is

enough to damn all your hopes. Does it succeed? That farce, called the "Italian Comedy," that of the Foire, will parody you; and a swarm of libels are published to prove to you that you should not in justice have met with any success. Some of the pretenders to learning, who neither understand Greek, nor read what is published in French, despise, or, at least, affect to despise you.

You carry your book to some lady of the court, and, as you go, tremble for fear she should give it to her woman, who will make papers for her hair of it; and the lackey, all bedaubed with lace, who is keeper of the book of luxury, insults your dress, which is the livery of indigence.

In short, I will suppose that the fame of your works may have forced envy herself sometimes to acknowledge you are not without your share of merit. This is the utmost you can expect while living; but you will pay dearly for this condescension, and have nothing to look for but perpetual persecution. You will have libels imputed to you, which you have never so much as read; verses for which you entertain the most sovereign contempt; and sentiments to which you are an utter stranger: you will be compelled to espouse a party, or else have all parties unite in a body against you.

There are in Paris a number of those little societies, in which some woman presides, who, in the decline of her beauty, begins to exhibit the first dawning of her wit. One or two of the men of letters are the first members of this little kingdom. Should you neglect getting yourself admitted in

quality of a courtier, you are sure of being held as a declared enemy, and are accordingly allowed no quarter. In the meanwhile, in spite of all your merit, you grow old in the midst of slander and wretchedness; those places which are destined for men of letters, are given to those who can best cabal, and not to those who are only recommended by their talents: and some pedagogue, by means of his pupil's mother, shall obtain a place to which you dare not so much as lift up your eyes; and the parasite of some courtier carry an employ from you for which you are extremely well qualified.

Should chance lead you into one of those companies in which some one of the authors who have been damned by the public happens to be, or one of those half-learned, who has not even merit sufficient to be ranked among the middling authors, but who has a place, or who may have thrust himself into some public office; you will soon perceive by the superiority which he affects to have over you, that you are in the very lowest class of mankind.

After forty years' labor, you resolve to seek, by means of intriguing, after what is never given to merit alone, and you make interest, as others do, to be admitted into the French Academy, and to be allowed to pronounce with a hesitating voice, at your reception, a compliment, which next day will be forgotten forever. This French Academy is the secret object of the vows of every man of letters; it is a mistress against whom they are perpetually making songs and epigrams, till they have obtained

her favors, and whom they neglect the next moment after fruition.

It is no wonder they should be desirous of being admitted into a society in which there are always some persons of merit, and from whom they expect, though with little reason, to find protection. But you may perhaps ask me, why people say all the ill-natured things in their power against this body, till such time as they become members of it, and why the public, which shows sufficient respect to the Academy of Sciences, uses so little ceremony with the French Academy. The reason is, that the works of the French Academy are exposed to the view of the public, whereas those of the other are covered with a veil. Every Frenchman thinks he knows the language, and piques himself on his taste; but they rarely value themselves on being thought natural philosophers. The mathematics will always be a kind of mystery to the bulk of the nation, and consequently will always be an object of veneration. Algebraic equations afford no matter either for an epigram, for a song, or for envy; but people judge with the utmost severity those enormous collections of indifferent verses, harangues, and panegyrics which are sometimes as false as the eloquence with which they are accompanied. We are sorry to see the device of "Immortality" at the head of so many declamations, which promise nothing that is likely to last forever, but that oblivion to which they are condemned.

It is most certain that the French Academy might serve to fix the taste of the nation, as will appear

by reading their remarks on the "Cid;" the jealousy of Cardinal Richelieu has, at least, had this good effect. A few works of this kind would be of very great service. We have looked for such these hundred years from the only body from whom they can proceed with any decorum or advantage. Complaints have been made that half the academicians consist of noblemen who never assist at their meetings, and that, among the remaining half, there are hardly to be found above nine or ten who give constant attendance. The Academy is often neglected by its own members; and yet no sooner does one of the forty die, but new candidates appear; a vacant bishopric could not occasion more caballing; they ride post to Versailles; all the women are set to work as well as all the bustling people; every spring is put in motion; and often the only fruit of these negotiations is the making of enemies; the chief cause of those horrible couplets which have forever undone the celebrated but unfortunate Rousseau, were owing to his failing of the place which he solicited in the Academy. Are you so fortunate as to carry the preference over all your rivals, your felicity presently dwindles to a mere phantom; do you meet with a disappointment, your affliction is then real. One might write these verses on the tomb of most men of letters:

*Ci gît au bord de l'Hippocrène,*
*Un mortel longtems abusé.*
*Pour vivre pauvre et méprisé,*
*Il se donna bien de la peine.*

Here lies, by the Castalian brook,
A victim to the love of fame,
A world of pains this poet took
To live in poverty and shame.

What, then, is the drift of this long sermon I have been making? Can it be to deter you from the pursuit of the road of literature? I will not so much oppose the course of destiny; all I mean by this is only to exhort you to patience.

## A FRAGMENT

### ON THE CAUSES OF THE CORRUPTION OF STYLE.

It is a general complaint that eloquence is corrupted, though we have models in almost all the kinds. One of the grand defects of the present age, and which has most contributed to this decline, is the mixture of styles. It would seem we authors do not enough imitate the painters, who make it a constant rule never to join the attitudes of Callot to the figures of Raphael. I have seen some histories, in other respects well enough written, and even good dogmatical pieces, composed in the style of the most familiar conversation. Someone has somewhere said we ought to write as we speak; the meaning of which is certainly this, that we ought to write naturally. Irregularity, with licence, incorrectness, and even a hazarded stroke of wit, may be tolerated in a letter; because a letter, which is supposed to be written without study or design, is of course an easy and careless composition; but when we speak or write with an idea of respect, we are then obliged to confine ourselves within the limits of decorum. Now, I ask whether there is anything more deserving of respect than the public.

Is it allowable to say, in a mathematical work, "that a geometrician, who would make sure of his salvation, ought to mount up to heaven in a perpendicular line; that evanescent quantities fall to the ground from their ambition of ascending too high; that a seed that has been sown with the wrong

end in the ground is sensible of the trick that has been played it, and therefore rises again in an upright posture; that were Saturn to perish, it would be his fifth and not his first satellite that would fill his place, because kings always keep their immediate heirs at a distance; that there is no vacuum in nature but in the pocket of a bankrupt; that Hercules was a natural philosopher, and that to resist a philosopher of his strength was a thing impossible?"

There are very excellent books infected with this blemish; the source of this so common a fault proceeds, in my opinion, from that reproach of pedantry that has long been made to authors, and with abundance of justice. *"In vitium ducit culpæ fuga."* It has been so often rung in people's ears, that they ought to write in the language of the best company, that the gravest authors are grown witty; and, in order to pass with their readers for one accustomed to see good company, they say things worthy of the very worst sort of company.

They have attempted to treat of the sciences, in the same tone as Voiture talked to Mademoiselle Paulet about gallantry, without reflecting that Voiture himself has not hit the true taste of this light way of writing, in which he was thought to have excelled; for he often mistook the false for the delicate, as he did the affected style for the natural. Pleasantry is never good in the serious, because it glances only on that side of objects on which it is never viewed by the public; it turns almost perpetually on false relations, or on equivocal meanings;

from whence it comes that those who set up for professed wits have commonly judgments equally false and superficial.

I should think we ought as little to mix styles in poetry as in prose. That style which is called Marotic has lately corrupted our poetry a little, by that extravagant mingling of expressions, at the same time creeping and noble, obsolete and modern; we sometimes, in pieces of morality, hear the squeaking of Rabelais's whistle blended with the softness of Horace's flute.

*Il faut parler français: Boileau n'eut qu'un langage:*
*Son esprit était juste, et son style était sage.*
*Sers-toi de ses leçons; laisse aux esprits mal faits*
*L'art de moraliser du ton de Rabelais.*

We should speak French. Boileau had but one language. His wit was pointed, his style grave and decent; observe his rules, and leave to left-handed wits the unenvied art of moralizing in the gross style of Rabelais.

I confess I was shocked to meet with the following expressions in a serious epistle:

*Des rimeurs disloqués, à qui le cerveau tinte,*
*Plus amers qu'aloès, et jus de coloquinte,*
*Vices portant méchef. Gens de tel acabit,*
*Chiffoniers, Ostrogots, maroufles que Dieu fit.*
*De tous ces termes bas l'entassement facile*
*Déshonore à la fois le génie et la style.*

## TO A CERTAIN UPPER CLERK.

June 20, 1733.

Sir: Since you are in a situation which enables you to do some service to the belles-lettres, let me entreat you not to clip so close the wings of our writers, nor reduce to the condition of barn-door fowls those who, by using their best efforts, might one day become eagles; a decent freedom elevates the mind, whilst a state of slavery renders it degenerate and abject. Had there been a literary inquisition at Rome, we had neither had a Horace, nor a Juvenal, nor even the philosophical works of Cicero. Had Milton, Dryden, Pope, and Locke not been free, England had been without either poets or philosophers; there is a certain Turkish despotism in proscribing the press; and to confine it too much is equal to a prohibition. Be satisfied with laying defamatory libels under the severest restraint, because such productions as these are real crimes. But whilst men openly publish such monstrous collections of the most infamous ribaldry, and so many other pieces, equally deserving our horror and contempt, permit Bayle, at least, to make his appearance in France, and let not the works of a person who has done so much honor to our country be rated as contraband.

You may perhaps tell me, that the magistrates who manage the literary custom-house complain that there are too many books. This is much the same as if the provost of the merchants in Paris should

say there were too many commodities at market. Let him buy that wants. An immense library is like the city of Paris, which contains very near eight hundred thousand souls: now, you do not associate with all this prodigious multitude; you choose out some select company, agreeable to your taste and inclinations, and you change it whenever you grow tired of it. Books are used in much the same manner: we choose out some, by way of friends, from the multitude. There will still be seven or eight hundred thousand books of controversy, and from fifteen to sixteen thousand romances, which you will never read; with a world of loose periodical papers, which you may read once, and then throw into the fire. A man of taste reads only the excellent authors; but a good statesman will tolerate both kinds.

The thoughts of men are become an important object in commerce. The booksellers in Holland gain a million yearly because Frenchmen formerly had wit. A middling romance is, as I am perfectly well assured, among books, what a fool, who would be thought a man of imagination, is in the world: people laugh at him, but yet they put up with him. This romance gives bread to the author who has composed it, to the bookseller who vends it, together with the typefounder, printer, bookbinder, hawker, and, lastly, the retailer of execrable wine, with whom all those gentlemen lay out their money. This work will moreover serve for two or three hours' amusement to a few women, with whom novelty is the most essential quality in books, as it is in every-

thing else. Thus, contemptible as it is, it has produced two things of vast importance, profit and pleasure.

Shows, moreover, merit still greater attention; I do not consider them as an employment which takes young people from debauchery; this notion is fit for such a one as an ignorant curate. There is time enough, both before and after shows, to enjoy the few moments which are commonly bestowed on transitory pleasures, immediately followed by disgust. Besides, men do not go to shows every day; and among the vast multitudes of citizens, there are not four thousand persons who attend them constantly.

I consider tragedy and comedy as so many schools of virtue, reason, and decorum. Corneille, who may really be called an ancient Roman living in France, has founded a school wherein noble sentiments are taught; and Molière an academy wherein are explained the duties of civil life. Those geniuses which they have formed draw strangers from the remotest parts of Europe, who come to receive instructions among us, and who contribute to the opulence of Paris. Our poor are fed by the produce of these works, which have gained us an empire over those very nations who have a natural hatred to us. The whole being well considered, a man must be an enemy to his country to condemn our shows. A magistrate, in right of having bought at a high price the office of a judge, has the audaciousness to think that it is indecent in him to go to see "Cinna:"

such a person may have a great deal of gravity, but surely is possessed of a very small share of taste.

There will always be, in this polite nation of ours, minds which naturally have a tincture of the Goth and Vandal; but I can only acknowledge those who love and encourage the arts as true Frenchmen. This taste, it is true, begins to sink amongst us; we are, like the Sybarites, weary of the favors of our mistresses: we enjoy the vigils of these great men, whose labors serve for our amusement, as well as for that of ages yet unborn, just as we receive the productions of nature. They will tell us they are due to us; it is but a hundred years since we fed on acorns; yet those Triptolemuses, who have given us the finest wheat, are become indifferent to us; nothing awakens this spirit of indolence and indifference for great objects, which is an inseparable companion of our vivacity and eagerness for trifles.

We discover every year more industry and invention in our snuff-boxes, our tweezer-cases, and such trinkets than the English have made use of to obtain the empire of the seas, to cause water to ascend by means of fire, and to calculate the aberration of light. The ancient Romans raised wonders in architecture for their spectacles of wild beasts; yet have we not for an age past been able to build a tolerable receptacle for the masterpieces of the human mind? The hundredth part of our card-money would be sufficient to build places for our shows more pompous than the theatre of Pompey: but where is the man in Paris who is fired with the smallest spark of love for his country? We game, sup, and like

scandal, compose wretched songs, and fall asleep in the hands of stupidity, in order to awake next day to renew the same circle of levity and indifference. You, sir, who hold at least a small place, which gives you an opportunity of giving wholesome counsel, do you endeavor to rouse men from this barbarous lethargy, and be a benefactor, if you can, to the commonwealth of letters, which has been so great a benefactor to France.

## OF A REMARKABLE CIRCUMSTANCE RELATING TO LITERATURE.

THE principal end of our historical essays being to follow the human mind in the various progresses it has made, and the obstacles it has had to encounter, I cannot justly omit a kind of persecution which the learned have of late undergone. The body of *literati* begins to challenge much more attention than any of the religious orders, whose disputes we have related, as its members are spread throughout all nations. Those who are distinguished by their superior knowledge and understanding insensibly govern others almost without perceiving it themselves, or exercising the prerogatives of that empire they have acquired over the mind; prerogatives which are held so dear by all bodies in the state. This secret authority, which good writers obtain, has always been an eyesore to those who have in vain attempted to usurp it.

A set of men, of great genius and true erudition, which cannot subsist without true philosophy, undertook, in 1652, to compile an immense dictionary of human knowledge, whose limits some among them had contributed greatly to enlarge. This undertaking met with the approbation and encouragement of all Europe, and the work itself became an important article of trade.

Several volumes had already appeared, which had given great satisfaction to the public; especially those articles which were written by the persons who

had the chief management of the work. The book was published with all the necessary forms that could insure its sale. The subscribers of all countries, who had advanced their money, thought it perfectly safe under the authority of the king's own seal, and expected to reap the profits of their subscription without any difficulty; for though the authors of this work intended it as a free gift to the human understanding it was considered by the subscribers and booksellers as a kind of bargain in trade, which should have been duly fulfilled.

Envy, however, at length broke loose, and was quickly seconded by fanaticism. These two eternal foes to reason and learning moved the Parliament of Paris against this Dictionary, which, in itself, was by no means an object of judicial inquiry; and besides, by being licenced under the royal signet, seemed to be secured against any attempts.

The Jesuits were the first who began the attack, in which they spared no pains to vilify this noble work, because they had applied for their body to have the doing of the theological articles, and had been refused. They little thought at that time that they themselves would ere long be condemned by the very courts whom they endeavored to incense against the "Encyclopædia."

The Jansenists effected what the Jesuits had begun; they found that those who had dedicated their labors to this work made impartiality their fundamental law; and consequently could be friends to neither Jesuits nor Jansenists, and that having devoted themselves wholly to investigate and repre-

sent truth, they would raise an aversion in mankind to fanaticism.

These two parties, who were most deadly enemies to each other, joined together on this occasion like banditti — if I may be allowed the comparison — who suspended their private quarrels to share in a general plunder. They put on the usual mask of religion and represented several of the articles as impious and heretical; and, by a refinement in wickedness, not exampled even in the greatest rage of religious controversies, finding that they could not attack with any success those articles in the "Encyclopædia" which most disgusted them, they pretended that the referring of one head, or article, to a future one was done with a design to fill the last volumes of this work with a poison which was not to be found in the first; they likewise inveighed against other theological articles, which were found to be perfectly orthodox, merely from a supposition that they were written by those persons whom they wanted to destroy.

But how could the parliament find time to try seven large volumes in folio already printed, and prejudge those that were not yet published? The prosecutors put their memorial into the hands of the attorney-general, who had still less leisure to examine this prodigious collection of arts and sciences, which no one single person can possibly comprehend.

Unhappily this lawyer gave credit to the malicious calumnies contained in the memorial he had received, and drew up his report accordingly. The article on

"The Soul" was particularly attacked in these memorials, as it was supposed to have been written by those whom they were desirous to render suspected. This article was represented as tending to establish the doctrine of materialism; upon inquiry, it was found to be a doctor of the Sorbonne, who was well known for his orthodox principles, and who, instead of being a favorite of materialism had opposed it even so far as to contradict the opinion of the great Locke with more piety than philosophy. This very extraordinary blunder was soon made known to the public, but not till after the parliament had passed an arret, appointing commissioners to make amendments in the work, and prohibiting the sale thereof in the meantime. However, the public still remained in hopes that it would at length be indulged with this work, which it wished for the more impatiently on account of the opposition it had met with.

This very singular anecdote, in the history of the human mind, which seemed a revival of the arrets that had been issued against Aristotle's "Categories," may serve to show us that every profession should keep within its own proper bounds, and that the civil law should not molest philosophy.

It would, however, have been very happy for the government had it experienced no other disputes but of this kind, which are only inconveniences and not disasters; nay, these slight perplexities, which have their source in the improvement of learning, and can never happen among an illiterate people, form a kind of panegyric on the age, which, however, it would be better if we could do without.

## DISCOURSE ADDRESSED TO THE WELSH.[1]

Oh Welsh! my countrymen, if you surpass the ancient Greeks and Romans, never bite the bosom of your nurses, never insult your masters, be modest in your triumphs; consider who you are, and from whom you descend.

It is true you had the honor to be subdued by Julius Cæsar, who caused all the members of your Parliament of Vannes to be hanged, sold the remainder of the inhabitants, ordered the hands of the inhabitants of Quercy to be cut off, and then governed you with great mildness. You remained for more than five hundred years subject to the laws of the Roman Empire: your Druids, who treated you as slaves and animals, who piously burned you in osier baskets, no longer retained their influence when you became a province of the Roman Empire. But honestly confess that you were always somewhat barbarous.

In the fifth age of your vulgar era, Vandals, to whom you gave the sonorous appellation of Bourgonsions, or Bourguignons, people of great genius, and extremely cleanly, who rubbed their hair with strong butter, to use the phrase of Sidonius Apollinaris, *"infundens acido comam butiro;"* these people, I say, made you all slaves, from the territory of your town of Vienne to the source of your river

[1] A satire on his own countrymen.

Seine; and it is one of the remaining customs of that illustrious age, for monks and canons to have vassals in this country. This fine prerogative of the human species subsists among you as a testimony of your wisdom.

One part of your remaining provinces, which you so long called the provinces of Oc, and which you so nobly distinguished from the provinces of Oui, were invaded by the Visigoths: and as to your provinces of Oui, they were taken from you by a Sicambrian named Clovis, whose ancestors had been condemned to be devoured by wild beasts at Trier, by the emperor Constantine. This Sicambrian, dignified with the title of the Roman Patrician, reduced you to slavery with a handful of Franks, who came out of the marshes of the Rhine, the Main, and the Meuse. The noble exploits of this great man were the assassinations of three petty kings, his friends and relations, one near the town of Boulogne upon the sea, the other near the village of Cambray, and the third near the village of Mans, which your chronicles call cities: it was at that time that the Welsh country had the melodious name of Frankreich, the ancient name of France, in commemoration of its conquerors; and you were the first nation of the world, for you had the standard of St. Denis.

Northern pirates came some time after to pillage you, and took from you the province which has been since called Normandy. You were afterward divided into many different nations under different masters, and each nation had its peculiar laws, as well as its peculiar jargon.

One-half of your country soon belonged to the inhabitants of the island called Britain, or England, in their idiom, which was then as harmonious as yours. Normandy, Brittany, Anjou, Maine, Saintonge, Guienne, Gascony, Angoumois, Périgord, Rouergue, and Auvergne were a long time in the hands of this people, the Angles; while you had neither Lyons, nor Marseilles, nor Dauphiny, nor Provence, nor Languedoc.

Notwithstanding this your miserable situation, your compilers, whom you take for historians, often call you "the first people of the earth," and your kingdom "the first kingdom." This is treating other nations somewhat impolitely. You are a brilliant and amiable people; and if you add modesty to your graces, the rest of Europe will be highly pleased with you.

Return your hearty thanks to God for delivering you from the Angles, by the factions of the red and white roses; and above all, return thanks that the civil wars of Germany prevented Charles V. from swallowing up your country, and making it a province of the empire.

You had a brilliant moment under Louis XIV., but don't for that reason think yourselves superior in everything to the ancient Romans and Greeks.

Consider that during the space of six hundred years scarcely anybody among you, except a few of your new Druids, could either read or write. Your excessive ignorance gave you up to the Flamen of Rome and his associates, like children, whom pedagogues govern and correct as they think proper.

Your contracts of marriage, when you made contracts, which was but seldom, were written in bad Latin, by clerks; you did not know what you had stipulated: and when you had children, there came a shaven monk from Rome, who proved to you, that your wife was not your wife, that she was your cousin in the last degree, that your marriage was sacrilegious, that your children were bastards, and that you were damned if you did not, without delay, make over one-half of your property to the chamber called Apostolical.

Your *basiloi* — kings — were not better treated than yourselves: you had nine excommunicated — if I am not mistaken — by the servant of the servants of God. Excommunication implied, of consequence, the confiscation of goods; so that your *basiloi* lost all right to their crown, which the Roman pontiff presented to whichever of his friends he thought proper.

You will tell me, my dear Welsh, that the people of Britain, or England, and even the Teutonic emperors, have been worse used than you, and that they were fully as ignorant. That is true, but that does not justify you: and if the British nation was so stupid as to be a long time a feudatory province to a Druid beyond the Alps, you will acknowledge that it contrived to revenge the affront; endeavor to follow the example if you can.

You had formerly a king who, though unfortunate in all his designs and expeditions, deserves some praise for having taught you to read and write; he even sent to Italy for persons who taught you the

Greek language, and for others who taught you painting and statuary: but there passed more than a hundred years before you had a tolerable painter or sculptor; and as for those who learned the Greek, and even the Hebrew, they were almost all burned alive, having incurred the suspicion of reading certain Judaical books; a thing highly dangerous.

I am willing to allow you, my dear Welshmen, that your country is the first country in the world; and yet you do not possess the largest domain in the smallest of the four quarters of the earth. Consider that Spain is of somewhat greater extent, that Germany is still more so, that Poland and Switzerland are bigger, and that there are provinces in Russia of which the country of the Welsh would not make a fourth part.

I wish your country may prove the first in the world for the fertility of its soil: but, for God's sake, think of your forty leagues of lands toward Bordeaux, of that part of your Champagne to which you have given the noble appellation of "the Lousy," of whole provinces where the inhabitants live entirely upon chestnuts, and of others, where there is no bread to be had but rye bread: take notice of the prohibition you lie under to export corn out of your country; a prohibition founded upon your want, and perhaps, too, upon your character, which would excite you to sell all you have as fast as possible, in order to purchase it again at a very high price three months after; in this you resemble certain Americans, who sell their beds in the morning, forgetting that they will want them at night.

Add to this, that the expense which the fashionable part of the nation is at, in flour to powder themselves, whether you have your hair dressed in the royal bird fashion, or whether you wear it loose, like King Clodio and the privy councillors, is an expense so universal that it is very reasonable to prevent the exportation of a commodity of which you make so good a use.

First people of the earth, consider that you have in your kingdom of Frankreich about two millions of inhabitants who walk in wooden shoes during six months of the year, and who go barefooted during the remaining six.

Are you the first people of the earth for commerce and maritime glory? Alas! I have heard it said, but I cannot believe that yours is the only nation in the world that buys the right of judging men, and even of leading them to be killed in battle. I have been assured that you make the public treasure pass through fifty hands before it arrives at the royal treasury; and when it has gone through all these strainers, it is at last reduced to the fifth part of its value at most.

In answer to this you will allege that you are extremely successful in comic operas: but can you deny that you are indebted to Italy for your comic as well as your serious operas? I will own that you have invented some modes, though you now adopt almost all those of the people of Britain. But was it not a Genoese who discovered the fourth part of the world, where you possess only two or three little islands? Was it not a native of Portugal who

opened to you a passage to the East Indies, where you lately lost your little factories?

Perhaps you may be the first people in the world for the invention of arts: yet, was not the compass invented by John Goya, of Melphi? Was it not the German, Schwarz, who discovered the secret of inflammable powder? Was not printing, of which you make so much use, the fruit of a German's ingenious labor?

When you are disposed to read the new pamphlets, which represent you as so learned a people, you sometimes make use of spectacles: thank Francis Spina for this; for without him you would never have been able to read small characters. You have telescopes; for them thank James Metius, the Dutchman, and Galileo, the Florentine.

If you sometimes amuse yourselves with barometers and thermometers, to whom are you indebted for them? To Torricelli, who invented the latter.

Many of you study the true system of the planetary world: it was a man born in Polish Prussia who discovered this secret of the Creator. You are aided in your calculations by logarithms; it is to the immense labor of Lord Napier and his associates that you are obliged for them: it is Guericke of Magdeburg that you should thank for the air-pump.

It was this same Galileo, whom I have just mentioned, who first discovered the satellites of Jupiter, the spots in the sun, and its rotation upon its axis. The Dutchman, Huygens, could see the ring of

Saturn; an Italian could see its satellites when you could perceive nothing at all.

In fine, it was the great Newton who demonstrated to you the nature of light, and who discovered the great law which causes the stars to move, and which directs heavy bodies toward the centre of the earth.

First people of the world, you love to adorn your closets, you hang up fine prints in them; but reflect, that the Florentine Finiguerra is the father of this art, which immortalizes what the pencil cannot preserve. You have also fine clocks; this likewise is an invention of the Dutchman, Huygens.

You sometimes wear brilliants upon your fingers; reflect that it was the people of Venice that first began to cut them, and to imitate pearls.

You sometimes contemplate yourselves in a looking-glass; it is to Venice likewise that you are indebted for this invention.

I should therefore be glad if you would show in your books a little more respect for your neighbors. You don't indeed do like Rome, where all those who discover any truth are brought before the Inquisition, let that truth be of what nature it will; and where Galileo was obliged to fast upon bread and water, for having taught them that the planets move round the sun. But what do you do? As soon as a useful discovery renders another nation illustrious, you combat it, and that for a long time. Newton shows the astonished world the seven primitive and unchangeable rays of light; you, for twenty years, deny what has been proven by experiments, instead

of making those experiments yourselves. He demonstrated gravitation to you: and during forty years, you, in opposition to him, maintain the impertinent romance of the Cartesian vortices. In a word, you never yield, till all Europe has laughed at your obstinacy.

In other countries, inoculation saves the lives of thousands; you exert yourselves for above forty years in endeavors to decry this salutary practice. If sometimes, in carrying to the grave your wives or your children, dead of a natural smallpox, you feel a moment's remorse — as you happen to have a moment of grief and regret — if you then repent not having adopted the practice of nations more wise and more resolute than you; if you sometimes venture to do that which is so common among them, this resolution does not hold, prejudice and lightness resume their ancient empire over you.

You either are ignorant, or pretend to be ignorant, that in the London hospitals set apart for the natural and artificial smallpox, one-fourth of the patients who have common smallpox die, while scarcely one out of four hundred of those that have been inoculated dies.

Thus you let one-fourth of your fellow-citizens perish; and when you are shocked at this calculation, which shows you to be so imprudent and so blameworthy, what do you do? You consult licentiates, either those of the foundation of Robert Sorbon, or others: you present requisitions! It is thus you maintained these against Harvey, when he had discovered the circulation of the blood: in this man-

ner were decrees issued by the Parliament of Paris, which condemned to the galleys those who wrote against the "Categories" of Aristotle.

Oh, first people of the earth, when will you become reasonable? You are under the necessity of acknowledging the truth of all I have said to you. You make answer, that all your follies do not prevent Mademoiselle du Chap from selling female habits and ornaments all over the North, no more than it prevents your language from being spoken at Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Moscow. I shall not take into consideration the importance of the first of these articles; the second is alone the subject of my discourse. You make it your boast that your language is almost as universal as the Greek and Latin were formerly. To whom are you indebted for this? To about a score of authors of genius; all of whom you neglected, persecuted, and tormented, during their lives. You chiefly owe this triumph of your language in foreign countries, to the multitudes of natives who were obliged to quit their country about 1613: Bayle, Leclerc, Basnage, Bernard, Rapin Thoiras, Beausobre, Lenfant, and many more, departed to make Holland and Germany illustrious: literary commerce was one of the greatest advantages of the United Provinces, and was entirely lost to you. The misfortunes of your countrymen contributed greatly to make your language known to so many nations: the Racines, the Corneilles, the Molières, the Boileaus, the Quinaults, the La Fontaines, and your good writers in prose, have doubtless greatly contributed to spread abroad

your language and your reputation; it is a great advantage, but it does not justify you in thinking that you surpass the Greeks and Romans in everything.

In the first place, be so good as to consider that you have no art or science for the knowledge of which you are not indebted to the Greeks; the very names of those arts and sciences sufficiently prove this; poetry, logic, dialectics, geometry, metaphysics, geography, even theology, if it be a science, all declare to you the source from which you derive them.

There is not a single woman that does not speak Greek without being aware of it; for if she says that she has seen a tragedy or a comedy; that an ode has been read to her; that one of her relations has had a fit of apoplexy, or is paralytic; that he has quinsy, or that a surgeon has bled him in the cephalic vein; that she has been at church, where a deacon has sung the litany; if she speaks of bishops, priests, archdeacons, pope, liturgy, anthem, eucharist, baptism, mysteries, decalogue, evangelists, hierarchy, etc., it is very certain that she has pronounced scarcely a word that is not Greek.

True it is, that those who derive all these terms from a foreign language may make so happy a use of them that the disciples may at last surpass the masters. But when, in process of time, you had formed your language of the ruins of the Greek and Latin, blended with your ancient Welsh and Teutonic terms, did you then succeed so far as to compose a language sufficiently copious, expressive, and

harmonious? Does not your sterility sufficiently appear from the dry and barbarous terms you employ upon all occasions? *Bout du pied, bout de doigt, bout d'oreille, bout de nez, bout de fil, bout de pont, etc.*— End of the foot, end of the finger, end of the ear, end of the nose, end of the thread, end of the bridge, etc., whilst the Greeks express all these different things by terms full of energy and harmony. You have been likewise reproached with using the expressions *un bras de rivière, un bras de mer, un cul d'artichaud, un cul de lampe, un cul de sac, etc.* Scarcely do you allow yourselves to use the word "*cul*" in its proper sense before matrons worthy of respect; and yet you make use of no other word to express things with which it has no sort of connection. Jerome Carré has proposed to you the word "*impasse,*" to signify your streets that have no passsage from them; this term is noble and significant; yet, to your shame be it spoken, it is constantly printed in your royal almanac, that one of you lives in the "*cul de sac,*" and the other in the "*cul de Blancs-manteaux.*" Fie! are you not ashamed? The Romans called such streets as had no issue "*angiportus;*" they could not find any resemblance between a street and the thing signified by the word "*cul.*"

What shall I say of the word "*trou,*" of which you make so frequent and so noble a use?

Do you not think that the names of your gates, your streets, and your temples would have a fine effect in an epic poem? We take pleasure in seeing Hector run from the temple of Pallas to the Scæan

gate. The ear is as much pleased as the imagination delighted, when the Greeks advance from Tenedos to the Trojan shore, upon the banks of the rivers Simois and Scamander; but, speak honestly, could a poet represent your heroes descending from the church of *St. Pierre aux Bœufs,* St. Peter with oxen; or *St. Jaques du haut pas,* St. James of high step; advancing with fury by the street of *Pet au diable,* devil's fort; and by the street *Troussevache,* drive-cow; embarking upon the gallery of St. Cloud, and going to join battle at the square of *Longjumeau,* long-twin.

The curious among you preserve a prodigious number of memoirs of the transactions that passed between the death of Henry II. and Henry IV. These are monuments of rudeness produced by the itch of writing; they are collections of satires occasioned by shocking events transmitted to posterity in the low style of the populace: at that time you had but one historian, and he was obliged to write in Latin.

At last you have cleared your language of this barbarous rust, of this sordid meanness; you have composed some good books; but have you in them surpassed Cicero and Demosthenes? Have you written better than Livy, Tacitus, Thucydides, and Xenophon? What author, of a genius above mediocrity, has hitherto written your annals?

Is it becoming in Daniel to say, in the very first page of his history: "It was not till the reign of the great Clovis, that the French made themselves forever masters of these vast provinces?" Certain

it is, that the great Clovis did not make himself master of them *forever;* as his successors lost the whole tract that lies between Cologne and Franche-Comté. This Daniel tells you, from the romancer Gregory of Tours, that the soldiers of Clovis, after the battle of Tolbiac cried out, as it were in concert: "We renounce mortal gods; we will no longer adore any but the eternal God; we no longer acknowledge any other God but Him whom the holy Bishop Rémi preaches to us."

It is not indeed possible that a whole French army should, in concert, pronounce these words, and these antitheses of mortal and immortal. Your Daniel resembles your La Motte, who, in an abridgment of the "Iliad," makes the whole Grecian army pronounce this verse, when Achilles is reconciled to Agamemnon:

*Que ne vaincra-t-il point? il s'est vaincu lui-même.*

Whom can he not conquer? he himself subdues.

How could the army of the Franks renounce mortal gods? Did it worship men? Were not Theut, Irminsul, Odin, and Fridda, whom these barbarians adored, immortal in their opinion? Daniel should not have been ignorant, that all the inhabitants of the North adored a Supreme Being, who presided over the secondary divinities; he had nothing to do but to cite the ancient book of Edda, quoted by the learned Huet, bishop of Avranches; he had nothing to do but to read what Huet has said expressly in his treatise concerning the manners of the Germans: "*Regnator omnium Deus*"—"God, the ruler of all;"

this deity was called God, or Goth, Goth the good; and it is matter of much surprise that barbarians should give the deity a title so worthy of him. Daniel should not therefore have put such an absurdity into the mouth of a whole army; a folly which suits only a Christian pedagogue. But pray in what language did Rémi preach to these Bructeri and Sicambri? He spoke either Latin or Welsh; and the Sicambri spoke the ancient Teutonic. Rémi, in all appearance, renewed the miracle of the Pentecost: *"Et unusquisque intendebat linguam suam,"*— "And each understood his own language." If you examine Mézeray carefully, what a heap of fables, what confusion, and what a style do you meet with! Deserve Livys, and you will have them.

I am inclined to think that among you the eloquence of the bar and the pulpit have had all the improvement they are capable of. The division of your sermons into three heads, when there is no occasion for such division; an address to the Virgin Mary, which precedes this division; a long Welsh discourse upon a Latin text, which is suited, the best it can, to that discourse; and, finally scraps of commonplace, repeated a thousand times over, are masterpieces of composition, no doubt; the pleadings of your lawyers upon the customs of Hurepoix or Gatinois will pass to the latest posterity; but I doubt much whether they will cause the Greek and Roman eloquence to be forgotten.

I am far from denying that Pascal, Bossuet, and Fénelon were extremely eloquent. It was upon the appearing of these geniuses that you ceased to be

Welsh, and that you became French. But don't compare the "Provincial Letters" to the "Philippics." First, consider that the importance of the subject is something: the names of Philip and Mark Antony are somewhat above the names of Father Annat, Escobar, and Tambourini. The interests of Greece, and the civil wars of Rome are objects more considerable than sufficient grace which is insufficient; co-operating grace which does not operate; and efficacious grace which is without efficaciousness. The great attraction of these "Provincial Letters" is lost with the Jesuits; but the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero still instruct Europe, while the objects of these harangues exist no longer; while the Greeks are only slaves, and the Romans only monks.

I am very sensible that the funeral orations of Bossuet are exceedingly fine; that they do not even want sublimity; but what is a funeral oration? a discourse of mere ostentation, a declamatory piece, a collection of commonplace, and often a violation of the truth. Should these poetical harangues be placed in the same class with the solid orations of Cicero and Demosthenes?

Your Fénelon, an admirer of the ancients, whose genius was formed by reading their works, lighted his waxen taper by their immortal flames; you will not be so presumptuous as to maintain that his Calypso abandoned by Telemachus, comes near the Dido of Virgil: the cold and unaffecting passion of Telemachus, whom Mentor pushes into the sea with his fist, in order to cure him of his love, does not

seem to be one of the most sublime inventions. And will you presume that the prose of that work is comparable to the poetry of Homer and Virgil? Oh my Welsh countrymen, what is a poem in prose, but an acknowledgment of its author's deficiency in point of genius? Do you not know, that it is easier to compose ten volumes of tolerable prose in your language, than ten good lines in verse, in this language overloaded with articles, deprived of inversions, poor in poetical terms, sterile in bold turns of expression, subjected to an eternal monotony of rhyme, and void of rhymes in the most noble subjects?

Do not you recollect that when Louis XIV., whom readers were resolved to take for Idomeneus, was dead; when Louvois was forgotten, whose character they discovered in Protesilaus; when the marquise de Maintenon (Mme. Scarron), whom they compared to the old Asterbe, was no longer envied; Telemachus lost much of its esteem. But the "*tu Marcellus eris*" of Virgil will always live in the memory of men; these lines and those which precede them, will be always cited with admiration:

*Ter sese attollens cubitoque innixa levavit,*
*Ter revoluta toro est, oculisque errantibus alto*
*Quæsivit cœlo lucem, ingemuitque reperta.*

In a prose translation of Virgil — for it is impossible for you to translate him in verse, and you have not yet had any success in rendering the sense of the Latin authors in prose — an imitation of the admirable speech of Dido, which follows, has been cited:

*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor,*
*Qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos.*
*Littora littoribus contraria, fluctibus undas*
*Imprecor, arma armis, pugnent ipsique nepotes.*

This is the pretended imitation of Virgil, which is represented as a faithful copy of this grand picture.

*Puisse après mon trépas s'élever de mon cendre*
*Un feu qui sur la terre aille au loin se répandre:*
*Excités par mes vœux puissent mes successeurs,*
*Jurer dès le berceau qu'ils seront mes vengeurs,*
*Et du nom de Troyens ennemis implacables,*
*Attaquer en tous lieux ces rivaux redoutables.*
*Que l'univers en proie à ces deux nations*
*Soit le théâtre affreux de leurs dissensions,*
*Que tout serve à nourir cette haine invincible;*
*Qu'elle croisse toujours jusqu'au moment terrible*
*Que l'un ou l'autre cède aux armes du vainqueur,*
*Que ses derniers efforts signalent sa fureur!*

When I am dead, may from my fatal urn
Arise a fire which half the earth may burn:
Roused by my vows, may my successors swear
In childhood to make my revenge their care,
And of the Trojan name eternal foes,
May they my rivals in each clime oppose.
Be earth a prey to these two nations' rage,
Let it to their contentions be a stage;
May all things serve to feed this direful hate,
May it grow till the moment marked by fate;
Till one or t'other party yield of course,
May its last efforts signalize its force!

Do but consider how weak, vicious, forced, and languishing this pretended copy is:

*Puisse après mon trépas s'élever de ma cendre*
*Un feu qui sur la terre aille au loin se répandre!*

When I am dead, may from my fatal urn
Arise a fire which half the earth may burn!

What means this fire which is to spread itself far and wide over the earth? Do we find in these verses filled with breaks, the least word which recalls the ideas of grief, of terror, and of vengeance, which breathe in this striking line:

*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.*

The author has an avenger in view, and the bald imitator speaks of a fire which is to burn half the earth. How much do the rhyming epithets, "implacables," "redoubtables," "invincibles," "terribles," weaken the painting of Virgil! How puerile is any epithet that adds nothing to the sense.

I do not know who is the author of these lines; but this I know, that when the rhyming of a Welsh poet comes in competition with the most beautiful passages of an ancient author, it must suffer by the comparison.

Oh, ye French, I take pleasure in joining with you in the admiration of your great poets; it is chiefly they who have spread your language to the polar circle, and who have forced even the Italians and Spaniards to learn it. I begin with your natural and pleasing La Fontaine: most of his fables are borrowed from Æsop, the Phrygian, and Phædrus, the Roman: there are about fifty which are masterpieces for nature, for grace, and for diction. This species of writing is altogether unknown to the rest of the moderns. I must own, I could wish that this extraordinary man had been less negligent in his

other fables; that he had written this language, which he has made so familiar to neighboring nations, with greater purity; that his style had been more chaste and exact; that while he greatly surpassed Phædrus in delicacy, he had equalled him in purity of elocution. I am sorry to see him begin by a short dedication to a prince, in which he says to him:

*Et si de l'agréer je n'emporte le prix,*
*J'aurai du moins l'honneur de l'avoir entrepris.*

To please him should the glory be denied,
'Twill be at least an honor to have tried.

It is a comical sort of glory to attempt to please a person; and what an absurd phrase is that of *"le prix d'agréer"*—"the prize of pleasing!" Phædrus does not express himself in this manner: Phædrus does not make the ant say, *"ni mon grenier ni mon armoire ne se remplit à babiller"*—"Neither my barn nor my chest are filled by prate." The fox in Phædrus says, "the grapes are too green," but he does not add, "they are good only for little brats."

It vexes me, when I meet with the expression *"la cigale ayant chanté tout l'été,"* the grasshopper having sung the whole summer; to which the ant answers, *"Vous chantiez! j'en suis fort aise, hé bien, dansez maintenant"*—"You sang! I am glad to hear it; well then, now dance."

The wolf might say to the dog with the chain, that he would not buy plenty with his liberty; but this wolf makes me uneasy when he adds:

*Je ne voudrois pas même à ce prix un trésor;*
*Cela dit maître loup s'enfuit & court encor.*

Bought at this price, I'd not a treasure prize;
This said, away he fled, and still he flies.

A wolf never desired gold or silver.

The man who blows his fingers because he is cold, and who breathes upon his soup because it is too hot is quite in the right: he does not at all deserve to have it said of him,

*Arrière ceux dont la bouche*
*Souffle le chaud & le froid.*

Avaunt the man, I like him not,
Who blows what's cold as well as hot.

It is abusing a trivial proverb which is not here properly applied: but these little blemishes do not prevent the fables of La Fontaine from being an immortal work.

His tales are, doubtless, the best we have; this merit, if it be a merit, is unknown to Greek and Roman antiquity. La Fontaine has, in this respect, surpassed Rabelais, and often equalled the simplicity and precision which are to be met with in three or four works of Marot; in his best tales, you meet with that pleasing vein, that nature of Passerat, who lived in the reign of Henry III., and has left us the metamorphosis of the cuckoo, a work too little known, in which we discover nothing of the rusticity of the age in which it was written, and which one would be tempted to think a work of La Fontaine himself.

Thus Passerat ends the tale of this poor, jealous wretch, who being metamorphosed into a cuckoo:

*S'envole au bois, au bois se tient caché,*
*Honteux d'avoir sa femme tant cherché;*

*Et néanmoins quand le printemps s'enflame*
*Nos cœurs d'amour, il cherche encor sa femme:*
*Parle au passants & ne peut dire qu'*ou,
*Rien que ce mot ne retint le coucou*
*D'humain parler: mais par œuvres il montre*
*Qu'onc en oubli ne mit sa malencontre,*
*Se souvenant qu'on vint pondre chez lui,*
*Venge ce tort & pond au nid d'autrui:*
*Voilà comment sa doleur il allège.*
*Heureux ceux-là qui ont ce privilège.*

Flies to the woods, there shuns the throng,
Vexed to have sought his spouse so long;
Yet when the spring revives love's flame
In every heart, he seeks his dame:
To all that pass he speaks and mutters
*Ou,* for no other word he utters;
But by his actions plainly shows,
He recollects his wrongs and woes;
Remembers how birds on a day
Came in his nest their eggs to lay;
For which he just revenge prepares,
Resolved in turn to lay in theirs,
Thus he alleviates his grief;
Blessed who can thus procure relief.

Upon this style La Fontaine formed his; for all your poets of the age of Louis IV. began by imitating their predecessors; Corneille at first imitated the style of Mairet and Rotrou; Boileau that of Regnier.

Perhaps the grand defect of La Fontaine's tales is that they almost all turn upon the same subject; it is always the debauching of a daughter or a wife: the style of them is not always correct and elegant; they are disfigured by negligences, by prolixities, and by proverbial and trivial expressions.

He seems to be inferior to Ariosto in the tales which he has borrowed from that author. Ariosto not only has the merit of being the inventor, but he has woven those little adventures into a long poem, wherein they are related as there occurs occasion. His style is always pure; there is in him no prolixity, no defect of style, no foreign ornaments; in a word, he is a painter, and a very great painter; that is the first merit of poetry; and it is what la Fontaine has neglected. Observe, in the "Joconda" of Ariosto, the young Greek who finds Fiammetta in her bed while she lies between King Astolpho and Joconda.

*Viene all'uscio e lo spinge, e quel li cede;*
*Entra pian piano, và a tenton col piede.*
*Fa lunghi i passi, e sempre in quel di dietro*
*Tutto si ferma, e l'altro par che mova,*
*A guisa che di dar tema nel vetro;*
*Non che'l terreno abbia a calcar ma l'uova,*
*E tien la mano innanzi simil metro,*
*Va brancolando in fin che'l letto trova;*
*Et di la dove gli altri avean le piante;*
*Tacito si caccio col capo inante.*

The door yields to her hand, she enters slow,
And groping cautious, forward tries to go;
Her steps she lengthens, onward tries to pass,
As if she feared to strike against a glass;
Her hand before resembling motions kept,
Thus she approached the bed wherein they slept;
And then, from where the others' legs were placed
Advancing forward, passed with eager haste.

It is surprising that your Boileau, in the judgment he has passed upon the "Joconda" of Ariosto, and upon that of La Fontaine, should reproach the Italian

author with certain liberties; he does not recollect that it is an innkeeper that speaks; every person should preserve his peculiar character. Ariosto, while he attends to this costume, as the painters call it, does not let a single word escape him that is not pure Tuscan; an extraordinary merit in a work of such length, written entirely in doubled stanzas.

I have spoken too long of this trivial species of writing, which, trivial as it is, contributes to the glory of literature;

*In tenui labor at tenuis non gloria.*

The subject's trivial, but not so the praise.

I should enlarge upon the superior merit of your theatre, whose only defect is that it is not sufficiently tragical, if this subject had not been so often treated of already.

It is my opinion that Euripides would blush at his glory, that he would hide himself through shame, if he was to see the " Phædra " and " Iphigenia " of Racine. The tragedies of Racine, and many of the scenes of Corneille, are some of the finest pieces in your language. Many of the scenes of Quinault are admirable, in a species of poetry no more known to the ancients than that of La Fontaine's tales. Your Molière surpasses both Terence and Plautus; I will acknowledge, likewise, that Boileau's "Art of Poetry" is more poetical than that of Horace; that he set the example in giving the precept, and that his copy is superior to the original. This is your glory; strive to preserve it: you excel in these two sorts of composition alone, you have rivals or mas-

ters in all others. You have been so affected by the charms of verse, that nowadays your treatises upon physics and metaphysics unhappily breathe the spirit of poetry; no longer able to write poems in the same taste in which they were written in the age of Louis XIV. you have only discovered the secret of how to spoil your prose.

You are threatened with another plague; I am informed that there rises among you, a set of rigid people who call themselves solid; gloomy geniuses, who pretend to judgment because they are void of imagination; men of learning, enemies to letters, who are forever banishing polite antiquity and fable. Do not give ear to their insinuations, oh, Frenchmen! If you do, you will soon become Welsh again.

Imagination, daughter of heaven, built formerly in Greece a temple of transparent marble; with her own hands she painted upon the walls of the temple all nature in allegorical pictures: there Jupiter, the sovereign of gods and men, was seen to bring forth the Goddess of Wisdom from his brain; the Goddess of Beauty is likewise his daughter, but she did not spring from his head: this Beauty is the mother of Love: that this Beauty may have the power of enchanting hearts, she should be never unattended by the three Graces: and who are these necessary companions of Beauty? One is Aglaia, who burns all; another Euphrosyne, who inspires hearts with tranquil joy; and the third Thalia, who strews flowers upon the footsteps of the goddess; this is the signification of their three names. The muses teach all the elegant arts; they are daughters of Memory,

and their birth informs you that, without the assistance of Memory, man can neither invent nor combine two ideas.

This then is what barbarians would destroy; and what can they substitute in the place of these divine emblems? The pleadings of M. de Saci, with some other works of equal merit? The harangue of M. Stephen le Dain, pronounced in the secretary's office?

Oh, ye Welsh, if Janus with a double forehead, representing the year which begins and ends, retains among you still the rude and unintelligible name of January; if your April, which signifies nothing, is with the ancients the month consecrated to Aphrodite, to Venus, to the principle that makes nature young; if the barbarous names, *Vendredi* and *Mercredi,* Friday and Wednesday, recall the ideas of Venus and Mercury; if the whole heaven in its constellations is still filled with the fables of Greece; respect your masters, if you have not a mind to resemble that learned Welshman, who maintained that the twelve patriarchs, sons of Jacob, had invented the twelve signs of the zodiac; that the Ram was that of Isaac, the Twins that of Jacob and Esau, the Virgin that of Rebecca, Aquarius, the pitcher of Rebecca; and that the other signs had been given wrongly.

Believe me, my dear brethren, you would not do amiss to retain the beautiful profane inventions of your predecessors.

## ANCIENT AND MODERN TRAGEDY.

A LETTER TO CARDINAL QUIRINI, BISHOP OF BRESCIA, AND KEEPER OF THE VATICAN LIBRARY.

My Lord:

Well did it become a genius like yours, and one who presides over the most ancient library in the world, to give yourself entirely up to letters. Such heads of our Church we may expect to see under a pontiff who instructed the Christian world before he was appointed to rule over it: but if literature in general stands indebted to you, still greater are my own obligations for the honor which you did me in translating my *"Henriade,"* and the poem of *"Fontenoy,"* into such elegant verse. The two virtuous heroes whom I celebrated have become yours. You have condescended to embellish my work, that you might render the names of Henry IV. and Louis XV. still more illustrious, and spread a taste for the polite arts throughout all Europe.

Among the many obligations which we of later ages are under to the Italians, and particularly to the popes and their ministers, we must not pass over the cultivation and improvement of the belles-lettres, which have softened by degrees the gross and barbarous manners of our northern climates, and to which we are in a great measure indebted for our politeness, our happiness, and our glory.

Under the great Leo X., with Grecian eloquence the Grecian theatre revived also. The *"Sofonisba"* of the celebrated prelate Trissino, the pope's

nuncio, was the first regular tragedy seen in Europe after so many ages of barbarism: in like manner as the "*Calandria*" of Cardinal Bibbiena had been before that time the first comedy in modern Italy: you were the first that built spacious theatres, and gave the world some idea of that splendor of ancient Greece, which drew together so many foreign nations at its solemn festivals, and became the universal model of perfection in every art and science.

If your nation has not always equalled the ancients in tragedy, it is not to be attributed to your language, which is copious, flexible, and harmonious, adapted to all subjects: but it is in my opinion, extremely probable that the great progress you have made in music has in some measure put a stop to your improvement in tragedy: one perfection has destroyed another.

Permit me then to enter into a literary discussion with your lordship on this head. Some people, perhaps, who are used to the general style of dedications, will be surprised to find me comparing Greek with modern customs, instead of comparing the great men of antiquity with those of your illustrious house: but I am talking to a man of letters, and a philosopher; to one from whose knowledge I may receive improvement; with whom I have the honor to be associated in the most ancient academy in Europe, whose members often employ themselves in researches of this nature: I am speaking, in short, to one who had much rather give me instruction than receive encomiums from me.

One of your most celebrated authors tells us, that

since the golden period in Athens, Tragedy, deserted and forsaken, wanders about from country to country in search of some kind friend that will assist and restore her to her former honors, but has as yet found none; if he means by this that no nation among the moderns has theatres where the choruses are almost always on the stage, singing strophes, antistrophes, and epodes, accompanied with serious dances; that we do not set our actors on stilts, or cover their faces with masks that express joy on one side and grief on the other: if he means that the declamation of your tragedies is not noted and accompanied with instruments, he is certainly in the right, and I don't know whether all this is not rather in our favor; prehaps our manner, by approaching more nearly to nature, is fully as eligible as that of the Greeks, which had much more splendor and magnificence.

But if he only designed to insinuate that this noble art is not in general so much considered since the restoration of letters as it was formerly; that there are nations in Europe who have treated with ingratitude the successors of Sophocles and Euripides; that our theatres are not like those superb edifices which the Athenians were so proud of; and that we do not take the same pains as they did in representations, which have become so necessary in large and opulent cities; we cannot but entirely agree with him.

Where shall we find any public spectacle at present that can give us any idea of the Greek stage? Perhaps in your tragedies, or operas. What say the

critics, an Italian opera like the theatre of Athens? Yes, the Italian recitative is exactly the *mélopée* of the ancients, a declamation in notes, and accompanied with instruments of music: this *mélopée,* which is tiresome and disagreeable in your bad tragic operas, is admirable in those few which are good. The choruses which you have added of late years approach still nearer to the ancient chorus, as the music in them is different from that of the recitative; in the same manner as the strophe, antistrophe, and epode, among the Greeks were set to music, though they differed from the *mélopée* of the dialogue: add to this, that in many of the tragic operas of the famous Metastasio, the unities of place, time, and action, are observed; besides that, those pieces abound in that expressive poetry, and elegance of diction, which embellish nature without overloading her; a happy talent, which none of the moderns have possessed but Racine among us, and of all the English writers, Addison alone.

I am sufficiently aware that these tragedies, which are so agreeable from the music and magnificence of the spectacle, have indeed one fault which the Greeks always avoided; a fault which has often turned pieces finely written, and in all other respects extremely regular, into monstrous and unnatural productions; I mean, the fault of bringing into every scene little airs and catches that interrupt the action, merely to show off the quavers of an effeminate voice that exerts itself to the utter destruction of probability and good sense. The excellent author whom I just now mentioned, and who has taken

several of his tragedies from French writers, has, by the force of genius in some measure remedied this absurdity, which has become, as it were, necessary. The words of his airs or sonnets embellish the subject; they are full of pathos and passion, and sometimes not inferior to the finest odes of Horace; for a proof of which I shall beg leave to quote that very affecting strophe sung by Arbaces, who is supposed to have been falsely accused:

*Vo solcando un mar crudele*
*Senza vele*
*E senza sarte*
*Freme l'onda, il ciel s'imbruna,*
*Cresce il vento, e manca l'arte:*
*E il voler della fortuna*
*Son costretto a seguitar.*
*Infelice in questo stato.*
*Son da tutti abbandonato;*
*Meco sola è l'innocenza*
*Che mi porta a naufragar.*

To this I will beg leave to add another fine air, sung by the king of the Parthians, conquered by Adrian, when he endeavors to render even his defeat subservient to his revenge:

*Sprezza il furor del vento*
*Robusta quercia avvezza*
*Di cento verni e cento*
*L'injurie a tolerar.*
*E se pur cade al suolo*
*Spiega per l'onde il volo;*
*E con quel vento istesso*
*Va contrastando il mar.*

There are besides these many others of equal merit; but what are the greatest beauties when out

of their proper place? What would an Athenian audience have said, if Œdipus and Orestes, just in the very minute of the discovery, the most interesting part of the drama, had entertained them with quavering out a fine air, or repeating similes to Electra and Jocaste! We must therefore, after all, acknowledge that the opera, so bewitching to an Italian ear by its musical attractions, though on the one hand it may be said to have revived, has notwithstanding on the other, in effect, destroyed the true Greek tragedy.

Our French opera deviates still more from the right point: as our *mélopée* differs more than yours from natural declamation, and is withal more languid. It will not allow our scenes their proper length, but requires short dialogues and little sententious remarks, every one of which makes a kind of sonnet.

Let those who are thoroughly acquainted with the state of literature in other nations, and whose knowledge is not confined to the airs of our own ballets, recollect that admirable scene in *"La Clemenza di Tito,"* between Titus and his favorite, who had conspired against him. I mean the scene where Titus addresses himself to Sestus in these divine words:

> *Siam soli, il tuo sovrano*
> *Non è presente: apri il tuo core à Tito,*
> *Confidati all' amico. To ti prometto*
> *Che Augusto nol saprà.*

Or let them read the soliloquy that follows, where Titus has these words, words which should be an

eternal lesson for kings, and the admiration of all mankind:

*——— Il torre altrui la vita*
*E facoltà comune*
*Al più vil della terra; il darla è solo*
*De' numi, e de' regnanti.*

These two scenes, comparable to the finest which Greece ever produced, if not superior to them; these two scenes, worthy of Corneille when he is no declaimer, or of Racine when he is not flimsy; these two scenes, which are not founded on opera love, but on the noblest sentiments of the human heart, are at least three times as long as the longest scenes in our musical tragedies: but these would not be borne in our Lyric theatre, which is only supported by maxims of gallantry, and ill-painted passions, except the *"Armida,"* and some fine scenes in *"Iphigenia,"* works more admired than imitated among us.

Among the many faults of our operas, we have, like you, a number of little detached airs, even in the most tragical parts, and which are more inexcusable than yours, because they have less affinity to the subject; the words are generally submitted entirely to the composers, who not being able to express themselves in the manly and vigorous terms of our language, require soft, vague, and effeminate words, foreign to the action, and adapted as well as they can to little ballads, like those which at Venice are called "*Barcarole.*" Where, for instance, is the connection between Theseus, just discovered by his

father on the point of being poisoned by him, and this ridiculous speech:

[1] *Le plus sage*
*S'enflamme & s'engage*
*Sans savoir comment.*

But with all these faults I am still of opinion, that our good tragic operas, such as "*Atys*," "*Armida*," and "*Theseus*," may give us some idea of the Greek theatre, because they are sung like the ancient tragedies, and because the chorus, even defective as it now is, consisting of tedious panegyrics on the morality of love,[2] does notwithstanding, in some measure, resemble the Grecian chorus, by continuing on the stage almost throughout the piece. It does not indeed, among us, always say what it ought to say, nor inculcate virtue:

*Et regat iratos, et amet peccare timentes;*

but, upon the whole, one may venture to assert that the form of our tragic operas, considered with regard to some particulars, reminds us of the ancient Greek tragedy. Several learned men, who are well acquainted with the works of antiquity, seem to think with me, that they are at once the copy and the destruction of the Athenian stage; a copy of it, as

[1] i. e. The wisest men often fall in love, and engage themselves they know not how.

[2] The original is "*la morale amoureuse*." Perhaps none but a Frenchman can rightly comprehend what M. Voltaire means by this expression: the *morality of love*, as I have literally translated it, does not convey to us the true and precise idea.

they admit of the *mélopée,* the choruses, machines, and deities, and at the same time the destruction of it; as they have taught our young men to be fonder of sound than sense; to prefer the tickling of their ears to the improvement of their minds; the nonsense of sing-song to sublimity of sentiment; and have besides contributed to the success of many insipid and ill-written performances, which have been supported by a few pleasing airs: and yet, in spite of all these faults, that enchantment which arises from a happy mixture of fine scenes, choruses, dances, symphony, and a variety of decorations, bears all before it, and silences even criticism itself; insomuch that the best comedy or tragedy we have is never seen so often by the same people with half the pleasure that a middling opera is. Beauties which are regular, noble, and severe are seldom much sought after by vulgar minds. "*Cinna,*" perhaps, is played for two or three nights; and the "Venetian Festival" may run three months: a licentious epigram has more readers than an epic poem, and a little romance meets with more admirers than de Thou's history. Our nobility very seldom employ good painters, and at the same time will quarrel about the distorted figures, and brittle ornaments from China. We gild and varnish cabinets, yet neglect true architecture; in short, real merit is overlooked in almost every art and science, in favor of agreeable trifles.

Happily for us, true tragedy appeared before any of our operas, which might have stifled and suppressed it. Mairet was the first writer, who, in a

tragedy imitated from the "*Sofonisba*" of Trissino, introduced the three unities which you had taken from the Greeks. By degrees our stage became more and more refined, and shook off that indecency and barbarism which disgraced so many others about this period, and served at the same time for an excuse to those whose unenlightened severity of manners banished all public representations.

Our actors did not indeed appear like those of Athens, lifted up on cothurni, which were absolute stilts, nor were their faces hid under enormous masks with brass pipes to them, to increase the sound of the voice, and make it more sonorous and terrible: neither had we the *mélopée* of the Greeks, nor anything besides a simple harmonious declamation, the same which you had for some time practised. In short, our tragedies were a closer imitation of nature: we substituted history instead of Greek fables; politics, ambition, love and jealousy took their turns to animate the scene; while Augustus, Cinna, Cæsar, and Cornelia, names far more respectable than the fabulous heroes of antiquity, often made their appearance on our stage, and spoke as they would have done in ancient Rome.

I shall not pretend to assert that the French theatre was in all respects superior to the Greek, and ought to bury it in oblivion. Inventors have always held the first place in the memories of men; but whatever respect we may have for the geniuses of former ages, it does not prevent our often receiving much more pleasure from those who succeeded them. We admire Homer, but we read Tasso, and

find in him a variety of beauties to which Homer was a stranger. We admire Sophocles also, and yet how many of our good tragic writers have master-strokes which Sophocles would have been proud to imitate if he had lived after them? The Greeks would have learned from many of our excellent moderns to unravel their plots more naturally, and to link their scenes together in that artful, though imperceptible manner, so as never to leave the stage empty, and to make the actors go in and out with some reason for so doing. In this the ancients are frequently deficient; and in this Trissino has unfortunately imitated them.

I am satisfied, for example, that Sophocles and Euripides would have considered the first scene of "*Bajazet*" as a school of instruction, where an old general, by the questions which he asks, informs us that he is meditating some grand enterprise.

> But what did our brave janissaries? they
> Pay homage to their sultan, thinkest thou, Osman,
> It is sincere, knowest thou the hearts of men.
> Or canst thou read their secret purposes?

And a moment after:

> Thinkest thou with rapture they would follow me,
> And hearken to their vizier's voice again?

They would have admired the artful method which this conspirator takes in the discovery of his schemes, and the account which he gives of his actions; a merit which was unknown to the ancient writers. That mixture of the passions; that contrast of opposite sentiments; those animated dialogues between rivals of both sexes; those quarrels,

reciprocal threats and complaints; those interesting disputes where everything is said that ought to be said; with all those various incidents that are so well managed by modern writers, would have astonished them. They might perhaps have found fault with Hippolytus for being so ridiculously in love with Aricia, or with his governor for giving him lectures in gallantry, when he says:

> Where wouldst thou thyself have been,
> If still, like thee, thy mother had refused,
> With mutual love, to answer Theseus' vows?

Words taken from "Pastor Fido," and much fitter for a shepherd than the governor of a prince: but the same illustrious critics would be struck with admiration at hearing Phædra cry out:

> Who would have e'er believed it, my Œnone,
> I have a rival: yes, Hippolytus,
> Whose savage and unconquerable heart
> Was ne'er by pity or affection moved,
> This tyrant loves, this conqueror is subdued.

The despair of Phædra on the discovery of her rival is surely infinitely preferable to the tedious and ill-placed satire on learned women, which Euripides has put in the mouth of his Hippolytus, who degenerates from the hero into a low comic character. The Greeks would, above all, have been astonished at those strokes of the true sublime which abound in our modern writers: how would they have been charmed with this:

> What could he do, my lord, when three opposed him?
> He might have died.

Or the answer, still perhaps more beautiful and

affecting, which Hermione makes Orestes, when, after having insisted on his murdering Pyrrhus, she finds herself unfortunately obeyed, and cries out:

What had he done, and wherefore didst thou slay him?
What right hadst thou? who bade thee?

ORESTES.

O, ye gods!
Did not Hermione herself command me?

HERMIONE.

And shouldst thou have believed a frantic lover?

Indulge me in one more quotation from Cæsar's speech, when they present him with the urn containing the ashes of Pompey:

Ye sacred relics of a demigod,
Whose noble deeds and ever-honored name,
All conqueror as I am, I scarce can equal.

The Greeks, my lord, have beauties of another kind, but I appeal to you whether they have any that resemble these.

I will even go further, and venture to assert that the ancients, who were so passionately fond of liberty, and have so often said that there could be no dignity of sentiment but in a commonwealth, might learn to speak with energy, even on liberty itself, from some of our tragedies which were written in the bosom of monarchy.

The moderns have moreover succeeded oftener than the ancients in subjects of pure invention. We had many performances of that kind in the time of Cardinal Richelieu: it was indeed his peculiar taste, as well as that of the Spaniards; he was fond of forming plots and characters, and afterward giving

names to the persons of the drama, as we do in comedy: and in this he frequently amused himself, as an agreeable relief from the fatigue of public business. The "*Venceslas*" of Rotrou is entirely in this style, and all the story fabulous; the author wanted to paint a young man of violent passions, with a mixture of good and bad qualities; a father tender and weak. In some parts of the performance he has succeeded. "Heraclius" and "The Cid," taken from the Spanish, are both of them invented stories: there was indeed an emperor called Heraclius, and a Spanish captain who had the name of Cid; but scarcely one of the adventures which the authors of the tragedies attribute to them ever really happened. In "*Zaïre*" and "*Alzire*," if I may take the liberty to mention them, and which I only do because they are well known, and therefore may serve better for examples, everything is feigned, even the names. I cannot imagine after this, how Father Brumoy could say, in his account of the Greek theatre, that tragedy will not admit of feigned subjects, and that this liberty was never taken at Athens. He then sets himself to work to find out a reason for a thing which never was or could be. "The reason," says he, "I believe may be found, in the nature of the human soul; nothing can move it but probability: now it is not probable that facts so noble as those which must be the subject of tragedy should be absolutely unknown: if, therefore, the poet invents the whole subject, even to the very names, the spectator is shocked; everything

appears incredible to him; and the piece can never have its proper effect for want of probability."

First, I shall beg leave to observe, it is false that the Greeks did not admit this species of tragedy, for Aristotle expressly mentions Agatho as a writer celebrated for it; and, secondly, it is equally false that these subjects never succeed; experience decides against Brumoy in this particular: in the third place, the reason which he gives for the poor effect which this kind of tragedy must have is no less absurd; he must have little knowledge of the human heart, who thinks it cannot be moved by fiction; in the fourth place, a subject of pure invention, and a true subject not known, are absolutely the same thing to the spectator; and as our stage takes in subjects from every age and nation, a spectator must turn over all the books that ever were written before he can possibly know whether what he sees represented be fable or history; but he will certainly never take that trouble; if the piece is moving and pathetic, he will naturally be affected by it; and when he sees Polyeucte will never think of saying, "I do not remember to have heard talk of Paulinus and Severus; such people as these ought not to move or affect me!"

Brumoy should only have observed that pieces of this kind are more difficult to write than any others. The character of Phædra was already in Euripides: her declaration of love in Seneca the tragedian: all the scene between Augustus and Cinna in Seneca the philosopher: but Severus and Paulinus must be the product of the author's own brain. But if Father

Brumoy is mistaken with regard to this, and a few other particulars, still his book is on the whole one of the best and most useful performances we have; and though I find fault with his errors, I have at the same time the highest esteem for his taste and erudition.

To return therefore to the subject in hand, I once more assert that it would be want of feeling and judgment not to acknowledge that the French stage is infinitely superior to the Greek, in the artful conduct of its plots, in invention, and beauties of diction and sentiment without number; but, at the same time, it would be the height of partiality and injustice not to confess that love and gallantry have almost ruined our stage and deprived us of almost every advantage.

It cannot be denied, that, among four hundred tragedies which have been exhibited on our stage, since the time when it began to flourish, there are scarcely more than ten or twelve which are not founded on some love intrigue, which is certainly much fitter for comedy: the piece indeed is generally the same, the plot formed by jealousy and a rupture, and ended in a marriage; one continued scene of coquetry, in short a downright comedy, wherein princes act the principal parts, and a little blood is shed for form's sake. The greater part of these pieces were so very like comedies, that the actors began at last to recite them in the same tone as they did what we call high or serious comedy, which contributed in a great measure to degrade tragedy, all the pomp and magnificence of declama-

tion being entirely forgotten. The players piqued themselves on the merit of speaking verse exactly in the same manner as prose, without considering that a language above the ordinary language ought to be repeated in a tone above the vulgar and familiar one: and if some actors had not happily corrected this fault, our tragedy would soon have dwindled into a heap of discourses on love and gallantry, repeated without force or spirit, in a cold and lifeless manner: as a proof of this, it is not long since, among every company of players, the principal parts in tragedy were known only by the names of the gentleman lover, and the lady lover. If a stranger had asked at Athens which was their best actor of the lover in *"Iphigenia,"* *"Hecuba,"* the *"Heraclides,"* *"Œdipus,"* or *"Electra,"* they would not even have understood what he meant by such a question.

The French stage has indeed of late years endeavored to wash off this stain, by some tragedies wherein love is represented as a furious and terrible passion, worthy of the theatre; and by some others, where even the name of love is not so much as mentioned: never did love cause so many tears to flow as nature has: the heart is generally but slightly touched by the complaints of a lover, but it is deeply affected by the melancholy situation of a mother on the point of losing her son: certainly it was only in compliment to his friend that Despréaux said:

> Love finely painted by the poet's art,
> Opens the surest passage to the heart.

The path of nature is a thousand times more sure, as well as more noble. The finest strokes in "*Iphigenia*" are those where Clytemnæstra defends her daughter, and not those where Achilles defends his mistress.

In "*Sémiramis,*" the design was to have exhibited a spectacle even more affecting than that in "*Mérope,*" with all the pomp of the ancient Greek theatre. It would be a melancholy consideration to reflect, that after our great masters had surpassed the ancients in almost every part of tragedy, we should fall short of them in our representations of it; but on our stage, one of the greatest obstacles to any grand and pathetic action is the number of spectators that crowd in with the actors; an indecency which caused remarkable confusion on the first night of "*Sémiramis.*" The first actress from London was present at the representation, and was astonished: she could not conceive how any people in the world could be such enemies to their own pleasures, as to spoil a sight which they might have enjoyed. This abuse was corrected the ensuing night, during the run of "*Sèmiramis,*" and might easily have been terminated. We may think lightly of it if we please, but an inconvenience like this is sufficient to deprive us of a number of excellent productions, which I have no doubt would have appeared, if we had kept our stage free, proper for action, and such as it is in all other parts of Europe.

But this is most certainly not the only evil which calls for a remedy among us: I cannot sufficiently

express my astonishment and concern at the little care which we take in France to make our theatres worthy of the excellent performances represented in them, and of the nation which encourages them: surely *"Cinna"* and *"Athalie"* deserve a better place than a tennis-court, with a few vile decorations at the top, in a bad taste, and where the spectators are placed without any order or decorum — some on the stage itself, others below in what they call the parterre, where they are crowded and pressed together in the most indecent manner, throwing themselves sometimes one upon another, as if there were an insurrection of the populace — while as far north as we can well travel, our dramatic works are exhibited in theatres a thousand times more magnificent, and with much more decency and decorum.

But above all, how far do we fall short of that good sense and kind taste, with regard to everything of this kind, which reigns throughout Italy! It reflects shame and disgrace on us to suffer these relics of barbarism to remain in a city so large, so well-peopled, so rich, and so polished as Paris is; while, at the same time, a tenth part of what we expend every day in trifles, as costly as they are useless, might enable us to raise public monuments of every kind that would render it as magnificent as it is populous, and one day perhaps place it on a level with Rome itself, which is our model in everything. This was one of the great designs of the immortal Colbert. I flatter myself you will pardon this digression and attribute it to the love I bear to the arts and to my country. I am not without hopes,

that one day or other, our magistrates may be inspired with the noble ambition of imitating the magistrates of Athens, Rome, and modern Italy.

A theatre, built according to the best ancient rules, should be very extensive; should represent a part of some public place—the peristyle of a palace, or the entrance to a temple; and should be so contrived, that one person of the drama, though seen by the spectators, might not be seen by the other actors, if at any time there should be an occasion for concealing him: it should be made so as to deceive the eye, which is the first thing to be considered: it should be capable of exhibiting the greatest pomp and splendor imaginable: every spectator should see and hear equally well in whatever part he was seated. But how can this be ever expected on a narrow stage, in the midst of a crowd of young fellows, who will scarce leave the actors ten feet space? Hence it arises, that most of our plays are nothing but long discourses; all theatrical action is lost, or if practised, appears ridiculous. This abuse remains, like many others, because it is established; and for the same reason that we do not pull our houses down, though we know them to be badly built. A public nuisance is seldom removed but at the last extremity. When I speak of theatrical action, I mean dress, ceremony, assemblies of the people, incidents and events necessary to the piece; and not any of those shows frequently exhibited, rather childish than grand, the resources of art to supply the deficiencies of the poet, and amuse the eye when they are incapable of charming the ear,

or moving the heart. I saw a play in London, wherein was represented the coronation of a king of England with all the exactness imaginable: a knight, armed at all points, entered on horseback on the stage. I have often heard people telling strangers, "O the charming opera that we have been at! We saw above two hundred guards on the full gallop." These gentlemen had no idea that four good verses in a piece were better than a troop of horse. At Paris we have a company of strollers, who, seldom having anything of real merit to represent, entertain us with fireworks; but many years ago, Horace, who had perhaps more taste than any of the ancients, finely ridiculed all those fooleries that bewitched the vulgar.

*Esseda sestinant, pilenta, petorrita, naves;*
*Captivum portatur ebur, captiva Corinthus.*
*Si foret in terris, rideret Democritus;*
*Spectaret populum ludis attentius ipsis.*

You will perceive, my lord, from the foregoing observations, that it was a pretty bold undertaking to represent "*Sémiramis*" assembling the several orders of the state, and declaring to them her intended marriage; the ghost of Ninus, coming out of the tomb to prevent the incest, and revenge his own death; "*Sémiramis*" entering the mausoleum, and returning from it, wounded by her son, and just expiring. There was reason to fear that a spectacle of this kind would be disagreeable to many; and in effect so it was; for three parts of those who frequent the theatre, and were used to amorous elegies, combined together against this new species of

tragedy. We are told that formerly, in a city of ancient Greece, rewards were proposed for those who could invent any new pleasure: the direct contrary happened with regard to "*Sémiramis.*" Whatever efforts were made, notwithstanding, to suppress this species of the drama, which has in it all the terror of true tragedy, they could not succeed: it was echoed on every side, both in writing and conversation, that apparitions were childish things to be produced before a refined and sensible people. But why so? did not all antiquity believe in them, and shall we not conform to antiquity! Has not our religion itself given a sanction to these extraordinary strokes of providence? and is it, notwithstanding, ridiculous and absurd to repeat them?

The Roman philosophers had no faith in ghosts in the time of the emperors, and yet young Pompey raises one in the "*Pharsalia.*" The English have certainly no more belief in spirits than the Romans had, and yet they see every day with pleasure, in the tragedy of "Hamlet," the ghost of a king, who appears nearly the same as the apparition of Ninus did at Paris. I am at the same time far from justifying the tragedy of "Hamlet" in every respect; it is a gross and barbarous piece, and would never be borne by the lowest of the rabble in France or Italy. Hamlet runs mad in the second act, and his mistress in the third; the prince kills the father of his mistress and fancies he is killing a rat; and the heroine of the play throws herself into the river. They dig her grave on the stage, and the grave-diggers, holding the dead men's skulls in their hands,

talk nonsense worthy of them. Hamlet answers their abominable stuff by some whimsies not less disgusting; during this time one of the actors makes the conquest of Poland. Hamlet, his mother, and father-in-law, drink together on the stage: they sing at table, quarrel, beat and kill one another: one would think the whole piece was the product of the imagination of a drunken savage: and yet, among all these gross irregularities, which make the English theatre even at this day so absurd and barbarous, we find in "Hamlet," which is still more strange and unaccountable, some sublime strokes worthy of the greatest genius. It seems as if nature took pleasure to unite in the head of Shakespeare all that we can imagine great and forcible, together with all that the grossest dullness could produce of everything that is most low and detestable.

It must be acknowledged, that, among the beauties that shine forth in the midst of all these horrid extravagancies, the ghost of Hamlet's father is one of the most striking: it has always a strong effect on the English — I mean, on those who are the best judges and are most hurt by the irregularity of their old theatre. This ghost inspires more terror, even in the reading, than the apparition of Darius in the *"Persians"* of Æschylus: and why does it? because Darius, in Æschylus, only appears to foretell the misfortunes of his family; whereas, in Shakespeare, the ghost of Hamlet appears to demand vengeance, and to reveal secret crimes. It is neither useless, nor brought in by force, but serves to convince mankind, that there is an invisible

power, the master of nature. All men have a sense of justice imprinted on their hearts, and naturally wish that heaven would interest itself in the cause of innocence: in every age, therefore, and in every nation, they will behold with pleasure, the Supreme Being engaged in the punishment of crimes which could not come within the reach of human laws: this is a consolation to the weak, and a restraint on the insolence and obstinacy of the powerful.

——— Heaven
Will oft suspend its own eternal laws
When justice calls, reversing death's decree,
Thus to chastise the sovereigns of the earth,
And terrify mankind ———

Thus Semiramis speaks to the high priest of Babylon, and thus the successor of Samuel might have spoken to Saul, when the ghost of Samuel came to tell him of his condemnation.

I will go still further, and venture to affirm, when an extraordinary circumstance of this kind is mentioned in the beginning of a tragedy, when it is properly prepared, when things are so situated as to render it necessary and even looked for and desired by the spectators; it ought then to be considered as perfectly natural: it is at the same time sufficiently obvious, that these bold strokes are not to be too often repeated.

I most certainly would not, in imitation of Euripides, make Diana descend at the end of the tragedy of *"Phædra,"* nor Minerva in the *"Iphigenia"* in Tauris; nor would I, as Shakespeare has done, bring in the evil genius of Brutus appearing to him in his

tent: I would never make use of such resources, except when they could raise terror and at the same time carry on the business of the play. I could wish, moreover, that the intervention of these supernatural beings should not appear absolutely necessary: with regard to this I must explain myself: If the plot of a tragedy is so intricate and perplexed, that we can in no way disentangle ourselves without the help of a prodigy, the spectator perceives the distress the poet is in, and consequently, the weakness of his resource: he only sees a writer who has made a false step, and is put to his shifts to recover himself: the more astonishing it is, the more the design appears.

But I will suppose the author of a tragedy had it principally in view to inform mankind that God sometimes punishes extraordinary crimes by extraordinary means; I will suppose that his piece was so artfully conducted, that the spectator every moment expected the ghost of an assassinated king demanding vengeance, though the appearance was by no means necessary to the clearing up of an unnecessary plot. I say that, thus circumstanced, a prodigy of this kind, supposing it to be well managed, would have a great effect, in any language, age, or country whatever.

Such is, pretty nearly, the conduct of "*Sémiramis*"— those beauties excepted with which it was not in my power to adorn it. From the very first scene we perceive that everything must be done by the intervention of divine power; and, from act to act, everything turns on this particular notion. It

is an avenging God who inspires Semiramis with that remorse which she would never have felt in her prosperity, if the voice of Ninus himself had not terrified her in the midst of all her triumphs: the same God, by that remorse which He had inspired, prepares the way for her punishment; and hence arises the whole instructive moral of the piece. The design of the ancient tragedies was generally to establish some great maxim or sublime truth: thus Sophocles finishes his *"Œdipus"* with observing, that no man can be called happy before his death; and in *"Sémiramis"* the moral is contained in these verses:

> There are crimes
> Offended heaven never will forgive.

This maxim is more important than that of Sophocles: but what instruction, the reader perhaps may object, can arise to the generality of mankind from a crime so uncommon, and a punishment still more extraordinary? I acknowledge, that the catastrophe of Semiramis cannot often occur, but what happens every day may be met with in the last verses of this piece;

> ——— remember that our secret crimes
> Are witnessed by the gods ———

There are few families on earth where this may not be sometimes applied: with regard to particulars of this kind, tragical subjects, that are ever so much above the fortunes of common people, have a real respect to and connection with the manners of all mankind.

I might indeed apply to *"Sémiramis,"* the moral

with which Euripides finishes his *"Alcestis,"* a piece wherein the marvellous has a much greater share than in mine, namely: that the gods employ the most wonderful and astonishing means in the execution of their divine decrees, and that the great events which they bring about, surpass the understandings of men.

Because, my lord, and only because this little work of mine breathes the purest and most severe morality, I have taken the liberty to address it to your lordship. True tragedy is the school of virtue, and the only difference between a refined theatre and books of morality is, that the instruction of the former is all in action, that it is more interesting, and heightened by the charms of an art invented to make earth and heaven happy, and which was therefore truly called the language of the gods. You, my lord, who possess this talent with so many others, will, I doubt not, pardon me this long detail, on a subject which perhaps has never yet been thoroughly understood; but which would no longer be obscure, if your lordship would deign to communicate to me those lights into antiquity, of which you have so perfect a knowledge.

## THE POLITICAL TESTAMENT OF CARDINAL ALBERONI.

After so many testaments which the public have rendered void and ineffectual, that of Cardinal Alberoni, at last, makes its appearance. I heartily wish that the cardinal had given the editor a place in his testament. This editor or author must, doubtless, know the world too well not to be sensible that a good legacy, which makes a man live in ease and affluence, is better than a thousand political speculations. A writer composes a fine book, full of the most profound reasoning, on the ruinous commerce of Europe with the East Indies: a merchant, with a stroke of his pen, sends a commission thither without reasoning about effects; gains an immense fortune; and does not read the book. The case is the same in politics: a man of genius and leisure forms projects to change the face of Europe: those who govern follow their old track, without so much as inquiring whether any projects have ever been formed.

Abbé de Bourzeys, afraid that he should not be read, boldly assumed the name of the Cardinal de Richelieu. Others have taken the names of Mazarin, of Colbert, of Louvois, and of the duke of Lorraine. All these testaments are composed in the style of Crispin, who takes the nightgown and the name of Géronte in the "Universal Legatee." It is evident, at first sight, that Géronte is not the author of that testament; we soon discover it to be the work of Crispin.

It must be owned, indeed, that the testament of Cardinal Alberoni is not composed by a Crispin: it is written by a man of no inconsiderable share of knowledge; but he must not pretend to make the world believe that this testament is really the work of the cardinal. In vain does he endeavor in his preface to elude the law which I enforced: that this single word, "The Testament of a Minister," lays the author under an indispensable obligation to deposit the original of the work in the public archives, or to prove the authenticity of it in some other way equally satisfactory.

If this law is violated, the public have a right to exclaim against the imposition. In matters of so great importance we are bound to convince the world that we act fairly and honestly. When I printed the "Anti-Machiavelli" at The Hague, I deposited the original copy in the town house, where it still remains. The author, indeed, does not pretend, that the "Testament of Cardinal Alberoni" is the work of that minister: he only says, that it contains his intentions; that it is a collection of some of the cardinal's thoughts, to which the editor has joined his own; by which means the work may become doubly valuable. Call it a Testament, or not, as you please, it is of no consequence. The titles of books are like those of men in the eyes of a philosopher; he judges of nothing by titles.

Whether it be Cardinal Alberoni or his interpreter that advises the king of Spain to encourage agriculture, it is certainly a very good advice, and his majesty ought to follow it, whether it come from a

minister, or a farmer. The author proposes to cultivate the lands in Spain by the hands of the negroes. And why not? These lands, which want laborers, still accuse that unhappy king, who deprived them of the hands of the Moors, under whom they were fertile. The deserts of Prussia, cultivated by foreigners, are a reproach to the lands of Castile.

Few men are better acquainted with Spain than this author. One would almost take him for the minister of Philip V. or for him who was the companion of his retreat and his unhappy friend — if indeed one can be the friend of a king. He enumerates all the causes to which the depopulation of Spain is owing; but, methinks, he is in the wrong not to reckon among these causes the expulsion of the Jews and the Moors, and the many colonies transplanted into America. The emigration of the Protestants from France is hardly perceptible. But the reason is, that France contains about twenty-two millions of industrious inhabitants; whereas, in Spain there are scarcely above six millions of people, and their pride and laziness jointly contribute to stifle the spirit of industry. Take much from him that has little, and what remains? How repair these losses in a country where parents transmit to their children the disease that attacks the human species in its source, and where superstition buries nature in cloisters? I here make use of the term "Superstition," which the cardinal employs; for I would not willingly change his words. The author plainly proves that Spain is the country of grandeur and abuses. He does more: he points out the remedies.

The work has not been reviewed by the inquisitors. There are some countries in the world which require that a man should be six hundred miles from them before he can take the liberty of telling these useful truths.

In the seventh chapter we see a part of that immense plan which was formerly conceived by Cardinal Alberoni. This man, in 1707, was not known in Anet — the curacy of which he refused — by any other character than that of "*uomo faceto e piacevole,*" who made excellent onion soups. He was then patronized by Campistron; and in 1718 he was going to turn the world topsy-turvy. I made mention of him in my history of Charles XII. I there did him justice; and he returned me thanks with so much the more gratitude, as he was then unfortunate. This project, which was just on the point of being carried into execution, was to arm the Ottoman Empire against Austria, and Charles XII. and the czar against England; to establish the pretender on the throne of Great Britain; to deprive the duke of Orleans of the regency of France; and to render Italy forever independent of Germany, after seven hundred years of subjection, or slavery, or submission. In prosecution of this scheme, an Italian body was formed, somewhat resembling the Germanic body. Don Carlos was to have Naples and Sicily; and his brother, Don Philip, Tuscany. Lombardy was to fall to the share of the dukes of Savoy. Mantua was to be added to the territories of Venice; and the dominions of the duke of Modena were to be more than doubled by the addition of Parma.

Views of the most extensive commerce came to the aid of these political regulations or disorders. The cannon-ball which killed Charles XII. overturned the whole project. But this shattered machine was strong enough, some time after, to place Don Carlos on the throne of the Two Sicilies by new expedients.

The author would have the pretender endeavor to obtain the sovereignty of Corsica, instead of making fruitless attempts upon the crown of England. He then proposes to him the vice-royalty of Majorca. Can these proposals come from Cardinal Alberoni?

Can it possibly be he who inveighs so bitterly against the memory of Cardinal de Fleury; and who says, that nothing was to be heard but the complaints and groans of the people during the administration of that minister? If it really be Cardinal Alberoni that speaks thus, he is either greatly prejudiced, or he is not so well acquainted with France as with Spain. He decries Cardinal de Fleury in everything, and degrades him below mediocrity. But when we travel from St.-Dizier to Moyenvic, we say: "It was the cardinal de Fleury that added all these territories to France; and what more could a great man have then done?" Cardinal Alberoni is become a very severe censurer since his death. His "Testament" is a satire.

He blames Cardinal Fleury for having favored the war of 1741, though it is well known that he was against it, and opposed it with all his might.

He blames the emperor Charles VI. for having

made his Pragmatic Sanction; but the daughter of that emperor, we believe, will be of a different opinion. He is for changing the constitution of Germany. In a word, he acts like a man who has lost his estate at play, and still taking pleasure in viewing the players, publishes aloud the mistakes he thinks he discovers.

Can it possibly be Cardinal Alberoni who thus judges the living and the dead? We know a marshal of France, who has acquired a great reputation by his grand projects, by the spirit of order and economy which he introduced, and by his genius and activity. The pretended testator treats him very severely. In my opinion, history should not speak of the living: she should imitate the judgments of the Egyptians, who never decided concerning the merit of their countrymen until they were no more. The characters of great men are always viewed in a false light during their lifetime. But had we an inclination to answer the bitter reproaches with which Cardinal Alberoni loads this illustrious Frenchman, we might say: Cease to reproach the marshal with exhausting the treasures of France, in his magnificent embassy to Frankfort, when Charles XII. was chosen emperor. Cease to represent Germany as jealous of this pretended profusion. The Spanish ambassador made as great a figure there as the ambassador of France. The duke de Ripperda had appeared at Vienna with still greater splendor; nor was it ever known that any nation was alarmed at the number of a plenipotentiary's domestics, or at the richness and magnificence of his plate. You were

certainly indisposed when you wrote this article, and you bestowed your malediction, at your dying hour, on a mere trifle. Your eminence was in a bad humor when you dictated the article in which you condemn, in a political view, the project of this general: you should not judge by the event. Men whose reputation with posterity will be higher than yours, because with an equal share of genius they had better fortune, have said that the plan which you think so chimerical, was of all others the most likely to succeed. In effect, what was this plan? It was to unite France, Spain, Prussia, Saxony, and Bavaria, to judge, sword in hand, the cause of the succession to the Austrian dominions. A young and victorious king had an army of a hundred thousand men, the best disciplined of any in Europe. Saxony had nearly fifty thousand. Two French armies, each consisting of about forty thousand men, were in the heart of Germany, and almost at the gates of Vienna. The Spaniards were going to fall upon Italy; and at that time, it hardly appeared that they had any enemies to contend with. They had even proposed to put other springs in motion, which history will one day bring to light. We ask, after all these preparations, if ever an enterprise had a better appearance? We ask, if this project was not a hundred times more plausible than yours? Small armies have sometimes been seen to overthrow mighty empires. Here two hundred and fifty thousand men attack a defenceless woman; and yet she maintains her ground. Own it, M. Cardinal, there certainly

is a Being above us who confounds the wisest schemes of mortal men.

You are but ill informed for a great minister, when you say, that this general whom you condemn, demanded a hundred thousand men from Cardinal Fleury. I can assure your eminence, that he demanded only fifty thousand to march to Vienna, and among these twenty thousand horse. He only obtained thirty-two thousand in all, of which but eight thousand were horse. But even these, with the troops of the allies, composed a force which nothing seemed capable of resisting, inasmuch as the enemy had not as yet assembled an army. On this point of history, I could inform your eminence of many things which you do not appear to know, and which would convince you that the man you affect to despise was very worthy of your esteem.

As I am still alive, I dare not use the same freedom as you who are dead and may say everything with impunity: but I may venture, at least, to give you a few particulars relating to the siege of Prague, which will make you change your opinion. You cannot deny that the sallies were real battles, and that the retreat was glorious.

I know not what harm the cardinal de Fleury, and the general you mention, may have done you; but it appears to me, sir, that a good Christian as you ought to have been, and a cardinal as you certainly were, should on his death-bed have been reconciled with his enemies. Your "Testament" seems to me to have been composed *ab irato;* a circumstance which alone is sufficient to lessen its authority.

This "Testament" will be more useful to politicians than to historians. The testator is far from falling into the absurd errors of the forger who assumed the name of the cardinal de Richelieu. This bungling forger, in making the greatest minister in Europe speak, at the very crisis of the war between the king of Spain and the emperor, says not a word of the manner in which France should have conducted herself with her allies and her enemies. It was a strange inconsistency to see the cardinal de Richelieu pass over in silence the negotiations and the interests of all the princes in order to talk of the university and taxes. In this "Testament" the case is quite the reverse. The author enters into the interest of all the potentates; assigns to each his particular share; disposes of the world at pleasure; and puts himself in the place of Providence. He talks of all that might have been done and of all that could possibly happen; his work is a collection of future contingencies.

There is not a simple or common thought in the whole of this "Testament." It is there said that, when the emperor Charles VII. was without dominions and without an army, he should have put the queen of Hungary under the ban of the empire. It would seem, however, that when a monarch passes such a sentence, he should have a hundred thousand bailiffs to publish it to the world.

For the rest, never did "Testament" contain more considerable legacies. The cardinal gives and bequeaths Bohemia to the elector of Saxony; the duchy of Zell to the duke of Cumberland; Tyrol

and Carinthia to the elector of Bavaria; Breisgau, with the Forest towns, to the duke of Deux-Ponts; and the duchy of Deux-Ponts to the elector palatine. This is not unlike the testament which Cerisantes, the Gascon, made at Naples in the time of the duke of Guise. He bequeathed to that prince his jewels and his gold plate, a hundred thousand crowns to the Jesuits, and the same sum to a hospital. He likewise founded a college and a public library. He had not wherewithal to defray the expenses of his funeral.

## THE SOUL.

Let us suppose a dozen philosophers on an island, where they never saw anything besides the vegetable world. Such an island, and especially half a score or a dozen good philosophers, are, it is true, no easy matter to be met with; however, we may very well imagine them, and therefore the hypothesis is allowable. They admire that life which circulates through the pores and fibres of plants, which seems sometimes to be annihilated, and at others to revive again; and not being over and above well informed of the generation of plants, or in what manner they receive their growth and nourishment, they therefore call this the vegetative soul. "What do you mean by the term 'vegetative soul?'" someone will ask. "It is," answer they, "a word we make use of to signify that unknown spring by which all these operations are performed." "But," says some mechanic, "do you not see all this is done in a natural way, by means of weights, levers, wheels, and pulleys?" "No," say our philosophers, "by no means. There is something more in this sort of vegetation than mere matter and motion; there is besides a secret power with which all plants are endowed, by which they admit the sap that is necessary for their nourishment; and this power, which cannot possibly be explained by any laws of mechanism, is a gift which God has bestowed on matter, and whereof neither you nor I can comprehend the return."

After a good deal of wrangling, at length our philosophers discover the animals. "Aha!" say they, after a long scrutiny, "here are beings organized exactly as we are! They have certainly the gift of memory, and that frequently in a degree superior to ourselves. They have the same passions, too; they have knowledge or consciousness; they communicate their wants; and perpetuate their species exactly in the same manner, and as well as the best metaphysician of us all could have done." They proceed to the dissection of one of these beings, in which they find a heart and a brain. "What!" say they, "is it possible that the author of these machines, who makes nothing in vain, should have given them all the organs of sensation, merely to prevent their being in the least capable of sensation? The thought teems with absurdity. There is therefore most assuredly some attribute within them, which is properly what we call 'Soul,' for want of a better word; something which is capable of perception, and which is provided with a certain stock of ideas. The question is: What is this thinking principle? Can it be something entirely different from matter? Is it a pure unmixed spirit? or shall we say it is a being of a middle nature between that matter, whose properties we know not in any degree, and pure spirit, about which we are at least as much in the dark? or shall it be a property with which God endowed organized matter?"

Then they fall to making experiments on insects, as on earth-worms, or the polypus; they cut them into several portions, and are astonished, after some

little time, to see new heads grow out of each single part; the same animal reproduces itself, and draws from its very destruction the means of multiplying its species. Has it several souls, which wait to animate these parts so produced, when the head shall have been severed from the original trunk? They resemble the trees which shoot out branches, and which reproduce their like from their wounds. Can these trees have several souls, too? This is by no means likely; it is therefore probable that the souls of these beasts are of another species than that to which we gave the name of "vegetative soul" in plants; it must therefore be a superior faculty, with which God has designed to animate certain portions of matter; it is a new proof of His power, and affords new matter of adoration.

Some person equally overbearing and false in his reasonings, happens to hear this discourse, and says: "You are a set of impious wretches, whose bodies ought to be burned, for the good of your souls, for denying man's immortality." Our philosophers are struck with such unheard-of language, and look at one another in amazement; one of them answers in a mild and placid tone of voice: "Why in such haste to burn us? What reason can you have to think that we hold that cruel soul of yours to be mortal?" "Because you believe," replies the other, "that God has given these brutes, who are organized as we are, the faculty of forming ideas and sentiment. Now you know that the souls of brutes perish with them; therefore you must certainly hold that the souls of men perish also."

The philosopher answers: "We are far from pretending to any certainty that what we call 'soul' in the brutes perishes with them; we are well assured matter never perishes at all; and we are of opinion that it is possible God may have endowed animals with somewhat that may retain to all eternity, if God so please, the faculty of forming ideas. We are very far from asserting that the thing is really and certainly so; it belongs not to man to be so confident of himself; but we dare not set bounds to the power of the Deity. We say it is extremely probable that the brutes, which are mere matter, may have received from Him a certain portion of intelligence. We discover daily certain properties of matter; that is to say, so many gifts of the Deity, whereof we had no manner of conception. We at first defined matter to be an extended substance; afterward we discover that we should have added solidity; some time after we knew that this matter had a certain power, or force, which is called 'inert force,' or '*vis inertiæ*'; after which again we were quite astonished to be reduced to the necessity of acknowledging that matter gravitates.

"Upon our attempting to push our inquiries still further, we were forced to own that there were beings resembling matter in some points, but which are likewise without certain attributes with which matter is sometimes endowed. The elementary fire, for instance, acts on our senses as well as other bodies, yet it tends not to one common centre as they do; on the contrary, it diverges from the centre in straight lines toward all sides. It appears con-

tradictory to all the laws of attraction and gravity, to which the other parts of matter are subject. Optics has mysteries altogether unaccountable, and for which it is impossible to assign any reason, but by hazarding the supposition that the rays of light penetrate each other. There is undoubtedly some property in light, which distinguishes it from all the other known parts of matter: it would seem that light is a kind of middle substance between bodies and the other kinds of entities, of which we are entirely ignorant. It is very probable that those other species of matter are themselves a certain middle rank which leads to other creatures, and that there may be, in this manner, a chain of substances which rise to infinity. *'Usque adeo quod tangit idem est, tamen ultima distant.'*"

This idea seems to us worthy of the greatness of God, if any ever was or can be so. Among these substances He might no doubt have chosen one, in order to place it in our body, which is known by the name of "the human soul"; the sacred books which we have read tell us this soul is immortal. Reason in this point agrees with revelation; for how is it possible that any substance should perish? And if all nature is destroyed, yet being must ever exist. We cannot conceive such a thing as the creation of a substance; and it is equally impossible for us to form any idea of its annihilation. But we dare not venture to assert that the Sovereign Lord of all things may not also have given sentiment and perception to that which is called matter. You are perfectly sure the essence of your soul is thought,

which is what we are by no means so positive of; for on examining a fœtus, we are at a loss to imagine that its head can possibly be so well stored with ideas, and are quite dubious, that in the case of a deep and perfect sleep, or in a complete lethargy, there is any such thing as meditation. Thus it appears to us, that thought may be, not the essence of the thinking substance, but a gift which the Creator may have given those we call thinking beings. All this has created in us a doubt, that, were He so pleased, He might endow a single atom with this faculty, and preserve this atom to eternity, together with this gift, ordering both or either at His pleasure. It is less difficult to conceive how matter may be rendered capable of thinking than to divine how any substance whatever should think. You have no ideas, except as it was the will of God you should enjoy this faculty; why then would you hinder Him from bestowing this quality on other species of beings? Can you be daring enough to believe that your soul is exactly of the same substance with those beings which approach nearest to the Deity? There is abundance of reason to think that they are of a very superior order; and that consequently God has designed to endow them with a faculty of thinking infinitely superior and more beautiful, in the same manner as He has granted a very moderate measure of ideas to brute animals, which are of an order inferior to you. I am utterly ignorant how I live, or how I bestow life, and you require me to comprehend how I come by ideas: the soul is as it were a clock which God has given us to regulate, but

without telling us of what sort of substance the mainspring of it is formed.

Is there anything in all this from which it can be inferred that our souls are mortal? Nay, further, we think as you do with respect to that immortality which the Gospel announces; but at the same time we hold ourselves too ignorant to be able to affirm, that God has not power to bestow thought on whatever being He pleases. You set bounds to the power of the Creator, which is beyond all bounds, and we stretch it as far as His existence. You will forgive us if we hold Him almighty, as we forgive your having restrained His power. You are certainly well informed of what He is capable of doing, while we pretend to know nothing of the matter. Let us, therefore, live in peace like brothers who adore one common father; you as becomes people possessed of souls at once bold and well informed; and we like ignorant and cowardly spirits, as we certainly are. We have both but a span of existence to enjoy. Let us then enjoy it in peace, without falling together by the ears for quibbles and knotty questions, which will be better resolved on our entering that boundless ocean of eternity, which begins the moment our hour-glass is entirely spent.

## TOLERATION;

AND THE MAXIM THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT PHILOSOPHERS SHOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO HUMAN SOCIETY.

This brutal person, unable to make a satisfactory reply, talked for a long time, and with great heat. Our poor philosophers in the meanwhile applied themselves to reading history, and after much study told the barbarian that he was unworthy to possess an immortal soul.

Friend, we read that throughout all antiquity matters went altogether as well as in our times; that there were even greater virtues, and that philosophers were never persecuted for matters of mere opinion; why then would you punish us for opinions we never held, and which have no existence but in your own distempered brain? We read that all antiquity believed matter to be eternal. Even those who discovered it to have been created let others enjoy their opinions in peace. Pythagoras might have been a cock, and his parents hogs; nobody had anything to say against it, while his sect was loved and revered by all mankind, except by cooks, and those who had any beans to dispose of.

The Stoics acknowledged God as much such another Deity as has been so rashly abandoned by the Spinozists;[1] yet the Stoics were the sect of all

[1] The famous Spinoza, the son of a Portuguese Jew, was born at Amsterdam in the last century, and has been branded as an atheist for maintaining that the whole

others that abounded most in heroic virtues, and enjoyed the greatest degree of credit among mankind.

The Epicureans made their gods resemble our canons, who maintain their *divine right* by a luxurious indolence, sipping their nectar and ambrosia in perfect peace, and giving themselves no sort of trouble how the world went. These Epicureans boldly taught the materiality and mortality of the soul. They were not the less regarded on that account. They were admitted into all offices of trust or honor, and yet their jumble of atoms did not occasion the least disorder in the world.

The Platonists, like the Gymnosophists, did not do us the honor to think such a being as God ever deigned to create us with His own hands. He had, according to them, left this servile office to subalterns called Genii, who committed a thousand disorders and blunders in the exercise of their function. The god of the Platonists was an excellent workman, who employed but bungling apprentices in his work here below. Yet men were not wanting in their respect for the school of Plato.

In a word, both with Greeks and Romans, so many sects, so many different moods or ways there were of thinking about the Deity, the soul, the past, and the future; yet none of all these sects were ever persecuted. They were all mistaken, a circumstance for which we are exceedingly sorry; yet were they

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universe, and all it contains, belongs essentially to the nature of God, considered as one only substance, of which thought and infinite extent are no more than the properties.

all peaceable and quiet, which confounds and amazes, because it condemns us, by showing, that most of the reasoners of this day are monsters, while those of antiquity were no other than human beings. They sang publicly on the stage at Rome, *"Post mortem nihil est; ipsaque mors nihil"*—"There is nothing after death; and death itself is but nothing." These sentiments rendered them neither better nor worse; and the world was as easily and as well governed as before; while a Titus, a Trajan, and a Marcus Aurelius swayed the world, like so many beneficent deities.

If we pass from the Greeks and Romans to the barbarous nations, let us stop a while among the Jews. Superstitious, cruel, and ignorant as this wretched people certainly were, yet they honored the Pharisees, who admitted the fatality of destiny, and the metempsychosis. They also respected the Sadducees, who absolutely denied the immortality of the soul, together with the existence of any manner of spirits, founding their dogmas on the law of Moses, which never makes the least mention either of rewards or punishments after this life. The Essenians, who held the opinion of fatality, too, and who never offered up any kind of victim in the temple, were still more revered than the Pharisees and the Sadducees; yet did none of their opinions occasion the least disturbance in government. There was reason, however, sufficient to promote cutting of one another's throats, burning and exterminating each other by turns, had they had the least inclination to divert themselves that way. O wretched

mortals! profit by these examples. Think for yourselves, and let others enjoy the privilege to do so, too. It is the sole consolation of weak minds in this short and transitory life of ours. What! shall you receive with politeness a Turk, who believes Mahomet made a voyage to the moon? You would be very careful how you would have disobliged Bashaw Bonneval, yet would you cut your brother Christian to pieces, because he believes God is able to have bestowed intelligence and thought on every creature.

In this manner spoke one of those philosophers; a second added: "Believe me, we ought never to admit such a thought as that any philosophical notion is capable of hurting the established religion of a country. Although our mysteries contradict our demonstration; yet they are not a whit the less revered by our Christian philosophers, who know that the objects of faith and of reason are of a very opposite nature. Never will philosophers be the founders of any religious sect: Why? Because they are without the leaven of enthusiasm. Divide the human race into twenty parts; nineteen are composed of such persons as maintain themselves by the labor of their hands, and who will hardly know that such men as Locke and Newton ever existed. In the remaining twentieth part, how few shall we find who read? And, even of those who do, twenty are readers of romances for one that studies philosophy. The number of those who study is infinitely small, and those few will never think of disturbing the peace of mankind.

Who are they who have brought the flame of dis-

cord into their country? Was it Pomponazzi, Montaigne, Le Vayer, Descartes, Gassendi, Bayle, Spinoza, Hobbes, Lord Shaftesbury, the count de Boulainvilliers, the consul Maillet, Toland, Collins, Fludd, Woolston, Becker, the author who disguises himself under the feigned name of James Massey, the writer of "The Turkish Spy," of "The Jewish Letters," of "The Persian Letters," of "*Les Pensées Philosophiques*"? By no means; they were generally theologians, who, being at first actuated with the ambition of becoming heads of sects, had soon afterward adopted that of being chiefs of a party. What do I say? All the books of modern philosophy put together could not have made such a disturbance as the dispute of the Cordeliers formerly did, to determine the orthodox form of their sleeves and cowls.

## DESCARTES AND NEWTON.

A FRENCHMAN, on his arrival in London, finds a total change in philosophy, as in everything else. He has just left the world, which abhors a vacuum, for one full of emptiness. At Paris we see a world composed of vortices of a subtile matter; at London there is no such thing in nature. With you it is the pressure of the moon that occasions the flux and reflux of the sea; among the English, it is the sea which gravitates toward the moon; so that, when you think the moon ought to give us high water, these philosophers think we ought to have quite the contrary, or low water. Unhappily for us, there is no coming at the truth of this except one had been able to examine the moon and the tides at the first moment of their creation. You will further remark that the sun, which in France passed for a mere cipher in this affair, counts in this country for a fourth part of the reckoning. Among your Cartesians, everything is performed by means of a certain impulse that is past all understanding; according to Mr. Newton, it is done by means of attraction, the cause of which is altogether as great a secret. At Paris, you figure to yourselves the earth much like a melon; at London it is flattened on both sides. Light, with a Cartesian, exists in the air; according to a Newtonian, it travels to us from the sun, and is about six minutes and a half in its passage. Your chemistry performs all its operations by means of acids and alkalies, and a certain portion of subtile

SIR ISAAC NEWTON

matter; in the English chemistry it is attraction which predominates.

Even the essence of things has undergone a total change. You agree neither about the definition of the soul, nor that of matter. Descartes asserts the soul to be the very same individual substance with thought; while Mr. Locke shows the contrary, with all the ease and perspicuity imaginable. Descartes maintains that matter is nothing but extension; Newton must needs add solidity. Here are terrible contradictions truly!

*Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites.*

This famous Newton, the destroyer of the Cartesian system, died in March, 1727. He lived honored by his countrymen, and has been venerated as a king who had been a benefactor to his people. He has been read with extreme avidity; and the eulogium of Newton, pronounced by Fontenelle in the Academy of Sciences, has been translated into English. They expected his declaration of the superiority of the English philosophy. But on finding that he not only deceived them in giving an account of this philosophy, but even that he compared Descartes with Newton, the whole Royal Society of London rose up in arms; and, far from acquiescing in his determination, they were very severe in their criticism on that piece. There were even some — and these not the greatest philosophers among them — who were shocked at the comparison, for no other reason than that Descartes was a Frenchman.

It must be acknowledged these two philosophers pursued a very different conduct, as well in regard

to their fortune and way of life as their philosophy. Descartes was born with a strong and lively imagination, which rendered him extremely singular in his private conduct of life, as well as in his method of reasoning. His fancy could not be restrained even in his philosophical works, in which we are constantly meeting with ingenious and lively turns of thought. Nature had almost made him a poet; and he actually composed for the queen of Sweden an entertainment in verse, which, for the honor of his memory, has not been printed. He followed for some time the profession of arms; and then, suddenly turning philosopher, at length he thought fit, in spite of the gravity of his character, to fall in love. He had by his mistress a daughter called Francine, who died young, to the great regret of the father. Thus he experienced all the vicissitudes incident to human life.

He was for a great while of opinion that, in order to philosophize in full liberty, it was necessary to fly the society of men, and especially to quit his country. He was certainly in the right, his contemporaries being utterly incapable of giving him any assistance, and more likely to do him prejudice than to be of any kind of advantage to him. He quitted France, therefore, in quest of truth, which was then persecuted on all sides by the wretched philosophy of the schools; but he found reason as little encouraged in the universities of Holland, whither he retired; for while they condemned in France only such propositions as were true, he was equally persecuted by the philosophers in Holland,

who did not understand it more than the former; and who, as they beheld his credit from a nearer point of view, for that very reason hated his person more; he was therefore obliged to leave Utrecht. He underwent the accusation of atheism, the last resource of calumny; and the man who had employed all the efforts of his natural sagacity to find out new proofs of the being of a God, was accused of denying His existence. So many persecutions necessarily supposed an extraordinary share of merit and reputation: and he was well known to enjoy a great share of both. Reason began to make some small progress in the world, and to penetrate the fogs and darkness of the schools, as well as to thin the mazes of popular prejudices. His name, at length, made such a noise that it was proposed to engage him to return into France, by rewarding him according to his merit. He was offered a pension of a thousand crowns. Trusting in this, he actually returned, paid the charge of the patent, was disappointed of his pension, and went back to philosophize in the solitudes of North Holland; while the great Galileo, at the age of fourscore, groaned away his days in the dungeons of the Inquisition, because he had demonstrated by irrefragable proofs the motion of the earth. At length our philosopher ended his life suddenly at Stockholm, his premature death being occasioned by a bad regimen, in the presence of some of the learned, who were his enemies, and in the management of certain physicians who bore him a mortal antipathy.

The career of Sir Isaac Newton was entirely dif-

ferent from his; his life, which lasted till nearly fourscore, was attended throughout with a happy tranquillity, honored and esteemed by his country. It was his great good fortune not only to be born in a free country, but in an age, too, in which all the fooleries of the schools had been banished, and reason alone was cultivated; thus mankind were more disposed to become his scholars than his enemies.

There is one very singular difference between his fortune and that of Descartes; which is this, that, in the course of so long a life, he was entirely free from the tyranny of passion, as he was from any kind of failing. He never had the least commerce with any woman; a circumstance of which I have been assured by the physician and surgeon in whose hands he died: in this we should certainly admire Newton, yet without blaming a contrary conduct in Descartes.

The public opinion in England in regard to the two philosophers of whom we are now speaking is, that the former was properly no more than a dreamer, while the other was a true sage. There are very few in London who read Descartes, whose works have, in effect, grown perfectly useless: there are also few who read Newton; but this is owing to its requiring much learning to be able to comprehend him. Yet everybody talks of them; and while the Frenchman stands excluded from any kind of respect or admiration, no praises are thought too high for the merit of the English philosopher. Some folks imagine that the exploding of that odd notion

of the horrors of a vacuum, the discovery of the weight and spring of the atmosphere, and the invention of telescopes are all of them owing to the sagacity of Newton; in short, he is in this country a second fabulous Hercules, to whose single valor the ignorant have ascribed the exploits of all the others.

In a critique published in London on Fontenelle's discourse, they have the boldness to assert that Descartes is no geometrician. Those who talk in this manner may be justly accused of turning against their benefactor. Descartes has made full as great progress from the point in which he found geometry to that to which he has carried it, as Newton has done after him. He was the first who taught the manner of finding the algebraic equation of curves. His geometry, which has, thanks to him, become so common since his time, was then thought so very deep that no professor would take upon him to explain it; and there was no one in France, but Fermat, or in all the United Provinces, besides Schouten, who understood it. He carried this geometrical and inventive genius with him into the study of dioptrics, which became an art entirely new in his hands; and if he has made considerable mistakes, it is because they who discover new countries cannot be supposed, at the first, to be alike thoroughly acquainted with every part of them. They who have followed him in it, owe him at least the obligation of the discovery. At the same time I am far from asserting that there are not abundance of mistakes in Descartes.

Geometry was a guide, which he had formed in some measure himself, and which would have conducted him with great certainty in his researches in physics: but at last, abandoning this guide, he was bewildered in the mazes of a system, which he adopted. From this time forward his philosophy became no other than an ingenious romance, and, at best, probable only in the eyes of those ignorant philosophers who were his contemporaries. He was mistaken with respect to the soul, the laws of motion, and the doctrine of light and color. He admitted innate ideas, invented new elements, created a world, and made man after his own fancy; so that it was said, with great justice, that man, as made by Descartes, was a perfect original, wholly different from that formed by God Almighty. He carried his metaphysical mistakes so very far as to pretend that two and two make four, because it was the will and pleasure of God it should be so; but I think I need hardly fear the imputation of partiality in saying that his very wanderings are somewhat amiable. It is true, he was deceived; but it was, at least, according to method, and his errors were the fruit of consequences very justly drawn from their premises. If he invented new chimeras in physics, we must at the same time acknowledge that he destroyed the ancient ones, and that he taught his contemporaries to reason, and even to fight him with his own weapons. In short, if he has not always paid in sterling coin, we owe him the obligation of having put down the bad.

Descartes bestowed one eye on the blind, which

enabled them to discover the blunders of antiquity as well as his own: the road he opened has, since his time, become infinitely frequented. Rohault's little book was formerly deemed a complete system of physics: at this day all the collections of the several academies of Europe do not form what may be called a good introduction to this science. By dint of sounding this abyss we have at last discovered it to be bottomless, and really infinite.

## NEWTON.

Newton was first intended for the Church. He set out with the study of divinity, and retained a tincture of it to his dying day. He very seriously adopted the cause of Arius against Athanasius, and even went farther than he, as all the Socinians actually do. There are at present a great many of the learned of this opinion; I shall not venture to criticise this communion, as they make no distinct body. They are, moreover, divided among themselves; and several of them have brought their system to pure Deism, to which they have adapted the morality of Jesus Christ. Newton was by no means of the number of these latter, and differed from the English Church only on the point of consubstantiation, being orthodox in all the rest.

A proof of the sincerity of his faith is his writing a commentary on "Revelation." Here he finds it clear, to a demonstration, that the pope is Antichrist, and explains the rest of the book exactly as the other commentators have done. Possibly he meant, by this commentary, to console the rest of the human race for the great superiority he had over them. There are several who, having read the little treatise on metaphysics which Newton has placed at the end of his "*Principia Mathematica*," have met with something fully as obscure as the Apocalypse. Metaphysicians and theologians are much like those gladiators who were obliged to fight hoodwinked. But when Newton worked, with the bandage

removed from his eyes, on his mathematics, his sight pierced to the utmost limits of nature.

He invented the calculation of infinites; he has discovered and demonstrated a new principle, which sets the universe in motion. Light was wholly unknown before his time. There were only confused and false ideas of it, till Newton pronounced the most admirable *fiat,* and said, "Let light be known," and light was known.

He was the inventor of reflecting telescopes; and the first that ever was seen was the work of his own hands. He also demonstrated the reason why the power and focus of common telescopes can not be augmented. It was owing to this new telescope that a German took Newton for a mechanic, that is, for a spectacle-maker. *"Artifex quidam nomine Newton,"* says he, in some paltry book. But posterity has since sufficiently avenged the affront. He had still greater injustice done him in France, where he was held as a blundering trier of experiments; and because Mariotte made use of false prisms, the discoveries of Newton were exploded.

He was admired by his countrymen as soon as he had published and proved the truth of his theory by his newly invented instruments; but it was forty years before he was properly known in France. But to make amends, we had the fluted and ramose matter of Descartes, the little soft vortices of the reverend father Malebranche, and the system of M. Privat de Molière, which is not yet much inferior in value to the works of Poquelin de Molière.

There is no one of those in the least degree acquainted with Cardinal Polignac, who has not heard him say a number of times that Newton was certainly a Peripatetic, and that his colored rays and his attraction bordered on atheism. Cardinal Polignac joined to all those advantages he had received from nature a very great share of eloquence; he composed verses in Latin with a surprising and a happy facility; but he knew no other philosophy than that of Descartes; all of whose arguments he had retained, just like so many dates. He had not yet become a geometrician, and nature had not formed him for a philosopher. He was an excellent judge of "Catiline's Conspiracy," or of "Æneid"; but by no means fit to decide on the merits of a Locke or a Newton.

When one considers that Newton, Locke, Clarke, and Leibnitz would have been persecuted in France, imprisoned at Rome, and burned at Lisbon, what are we to think of human reason? One would swear it was a native of England in the present age at least. In the time of Queen Mary there was a violent persecution on account of the proper way of pronouncing Greek, in which the persecutors were, as usual, in the wrong. They who put Galileo before the Inquisition were still more so; and every inquisitor ought to blush, from the bottom of his soul, at the sight of the sphere of Copernicus. Nevertheless, had Newton been born in Portugal, and had a Dominican friar happened to discover a heresy in his inverted ratio of the squares of the distances of

the planets, Sir Isaac Newton had certainly walked in procession in his *sanbenito* [1] at some *auto-da-fé*.

It has been often asked how it comes to pass that they who, by their function, should be learned and humane, have so commonly proved to the last degree ignorant and implacable. Their ignorance was wholly owing to their having studied too closely, and too much; and their unrelenting cruelty was occasioned by the consciousness that their wretched learning was the just object of the contempt of true philosophers. Notwithstanding, those very inquisitors who had the effrontery to condemn the system of Copernicus not only as heretical but as absurd, had not the slightest grounds of apprehension from that system. Although the earth performed her annual revolution around the sun, together with the rest of the planets, the Church would, for all that, have enjoyed both her revenues and her dignities. Even the ecclesiastical dogmas are in perfect safety, when impugned only by philosophers: all the academies under the cope of heaven are not able, with their utmost efforts, to make the smallest revolution in the common creed of a nation, let its tenets be never so absurd. From what source, then, arises this pious rage which has so often inflamed the disciples of Anitus against those of Socrates? It is because the former are con-

[1] This is a corruption of *sacco benito*, the sackcloth worn by penitents in the primitive church. It is now the name given to the scapulary, or broad piece of cloth marked with the sign of the cross, put upon convicted heretics when they are brought from the Inquisition to the stake.

scious that they merit and enjoy the sovereign contempt of the latter.

I had a notion in my younger days that Newton had made his fortune by his extraordinary merit. I made no doubt that both court and city at London had created him, with one common consent, chief manager and supreme director of the coin of the kingdom. I was herein greatly mistaken; Sir Isaac Newton had a pretty niece, called Mrs. Conduite, who had the good fortune to please the lord high treasurer, Halifax.[1] Had it not been for this handsome niece, his doctrine of gravitation and infinitesimals had been wholly useless to him, and he might have starved with all his talents.

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[1] The earl of Halifax was chancellor of the exchequer.

## CHRONOLOGY,

AS REFORMED BY NEWTON, WHO MAKES THE WORLD YOUNGER THAN THE COMMON ERA BY FIVE HUNDRED YEARS.

I COME now to take notice of another work, more within the reach of the human mind; but which, nevertheless, discovers that creative genius which Newton displayed in all his productions. This is his system of chronology, which is wholly new; for he appears to have been fated, in whatever subject he engaged, to make a total revolution in the commonly received opinions of the rest of mankind. Accustomed as he was to bring order out of confusion and to get beauty and regularity from the chaos of opinions he examined, he engaged in this work with a view to throw light upon those remote parts of history where fables and facts lay jumbled together, and to fix and ascertain a very doubtful chronology. One thing is past doubt: that there is scarcely a family, city, or nation which does not endeavor, by all possible means, to carry their origin as far back into antiquity as may be. Besides, the first historians are generally the least exact in fixing the dates of transactions. Books were then a thousand times scarcer than at present, and consequently were less obnoxious to criticism; they imposed on mankind with greater impunity; and it is unquestionable that facts have frequently been forged, it is more probable that dates have been so likewise. Upon the whole, it appeared to Mr. New-

ton that the world was younger by five hundred years than the accounts of the chronologers made it. He grounds his conjecture on the common course of nature, and on astronomical observations.

What is here meant by the common course of nature is the duration of each generation of men. The Egyptians were the first to make use of this vague way of computation, in their accounts of the first periods in their history. They reckoned three hundred and forty-one generations from Menes to Sethon; and having no fixed dates, they reckoned that three generations made up the space of one hundred years. Thus, from the reign of Menes to that of Sethon, they computed eleven thousand three hundred and forty years. The Greeks, before the institution of the Olympiads, followed the same method of computation as the Egyptians, and somewhat increased the duration of each generation by valuing each at about forty years. Now both Greeks and Egyptians were most egregiously out by this method of calculation. It is true, according to the common course of nature, that three generations make pretty nearly from one hundred to six-score years; but it is far from following that three reigns make up this number of years. Thus a man who should attempt to write a history without the assistance of fixed epochs, and having learned that in such a nation there had been a series of nine kings, would err considerably in allowing three hundred years for those nine kings. Each generation is about thirty years, and each reign about twenty, one with another. If we take the thirty kings who have reigned in Eng-

land from William the Conqueror to George I., their reigns will be found to amount to six hundred and forty-eight years, which, divided by thirty, the number of those kings, will allow about twenty-one years and a half for each reign. This is properly the common course of nature. The ancients were therefore deceived in making the duration of reigns and that of generations to be generally equal; they have consequently over-reckoned themselves, so that it is necessary to retrench this computation a little.

Astronomical observations seem to yield our philosopher still greater aid. He fights to advantage on his ground. The earth, you know, besides its annual motion which whirls it around the sun from west to east in the space of a year, has also a peculiar revolution altogether unknown till these latter ages. Its poles have a very slow retrograde motion from east to west, so that its position is every day changed with regard to the heavens. This yearly change of position, though insensible, becomes considerable in time, so as in seventy-two years to amount to one degree; that is to say, the three hundred and sixtieth part of the heavens. Hence, in the space of seventy-two years the vernal equinoctial colure, which, in the beginning of that period, passed through a certain fixed star, will at the end of it pass through a different fixed star. From this it follows that the sun, instead of being in that part of the heavens where the Ram was placed in the time of Hipparchus, is found to correspond to that part of the heavens where the constellation of the Bull is situated, and the Twins have succeeded to the place

in which the Bull then was. All the signs have changed places; although we have retained the way of speaking assumed by the ancients. We say, for instance, that the sun in the spring is in the Ram, by the same complaisance by which we say the sun moves.

Hipparchus was the first of the Greeks who perceived that some change happened in the constellations with regard to the equinoxes, or rather learned this circumstance of the Egyptians. Their philosophers attributed this motion to the stars, for at that time of day they were very far from imagining any such revolution in the earth. It was believed by them wholly immovable; they therefore created a heaven in which they stuck all the fixed stars, and to this heaven they gave a particular motion, which caused it to advance toward the east, while all the stars seemed to have a daily revolution from east to west. To this error they added a second, which was much more consequential. They believed that this imaginary heaven of the fixed stars advanced one degree toward the east in a hundred years. Thus they were mistaken in their astronomical calculations, as well as in their system of the universe: for instance, an astronomer would then have said that the vernal equinox was in the time of such an observer, in such a sign, and in such a fixed star; there has been a progress of two degrees from that observation till our time: now, two degrees are equal to two hundred years; therefore it follows that this observer must have lived two hundred years before us. It is therefore certain that an astronomer

who reasoned in this manner would have been wrong by about fifty years. This is then the reason why the ancient astronomers, thus doubly deceived, made their great year of the world — that is to say, of the revolution of the whole heavens — to consist of about thirty-six thousand years. But the moderns know that this imaginary revolution of the starry heavens is no more than the revolution of the poles of the earth, which it performs in twenty-five thousand nine hundred years. It will be proper to observe, by the by, that Mr. Newton, in determining the figure of the earth, has very happily explained this revolution.

All this being laid down, it remains, in order to ascertain chronology, to see at what fixed star the equinoctial colure now cuts the ecliptic in the spring, and to know whether some of the ancients may not have informed us in what point the ecliptic was cut in his time by the same equinoctial colure. Clemens Alexandrinus relates that Chiron, who was in the expedition of the Argonauts, observed the constellations in the time of that famous expedition, and fixed the vernal equinox in the middle of the Bear, the autumnal equinox in the middle of the Balance, our summer solstice in the middle of Cancer, and the winter solstice in the middle of Capricorn.

A long time after the expedition of the Argonauts, and a year before the Peloponnesian war, Meton observed that the point of the summer solstice passed through the sixth degree of Cancer.

Now each sign in the Zodiac consists of thirty degrees. In the time of Chiron the solstice was in

the middle of the sign, that is to say, in its fifteenth degree; a year before the Peloponnesian war, it was in the eighth degree; it had therefore been retrograde seven degrees; a degree then being equal to seventy-two years, it follows that from the beginning of the Peloponnesian war to the expedition of the Argonauts, there are but seven times seventy-two, which makes five hundred and four years, and not seven hundred years, as the Greeks say.

Thus, by comparing the state of the heavens at this day with the state in which it then was, we see the expedition of the Argonauts should have been placed nine hundred and nine years before Jesus Christ, and not about fourteen hundred years, and that consequently the world is younger by about five hundred years than was commonly imagined.

By this means all the epochs are brought nearer to us, and every transaction is made to happen later than it is said to have been. This system seems to me to be true, though I dare not take upon me to say whether it will be adopted by the multitude, or whether men will hence be brought to reform the vulgar chronology. The learned may possibly be of opinion that it would be doing too much honor to one and the same person to admit that he perfected physics, geometry, and history; this would be a kind of universal monarchy in literature, which self-love will not easily put up with. Thus, while the partisans of vortices and fluted matter attacked gravitation, which had been already demonstrated, the reverend Father Souciet and M. Fréret were writing against Newton's chronology before it was printed.

## A DISSERTATION

BY DOCTOR AKAKIA, PHYSICIAN TO THE POPE.

The president of the Academy of Berlin was the famous Maupertuis, a French astronomer, mathematician, and philosopher, who owed his appointment in 1740 to Frederick the Great. He had accompanied an expedition to Lapland, at the instance of Louis XV., in 1736, to determine a degree of longitude. When Voltaire accepted the king's invitation and pension, Maupertuis felt himself superseded in the royal regard. A trivial incident fanned his jealousy into flame. About the same time there appeared a spiteful anonymous production in which this passage occurred: "If we search both ancient and modern history, we shall find no example of a prince who has given seven thousand crowns a year to a man of letters as a man of letters. There have been greater poets than Voltaire; there was never one so well recompensed. . . . The king of Prussia heaps favors upon men of talent for precisely the same reasons that induce a prince of Germany to bestow them upon a buffoon or a dwarf." The writer was one La Beaumelle, afterward scarified by Voltaire, who attributed the inspiration to Maupertuis.

The latter was tempted to publish a series of "Letters," which were the originating cause of the burlesque satire here presented. The learned president actually did propose the investigations which Voltaire's ridicule made it hard to regard seriously. He suggested that a hole should be dug down to the earth's centre, that one of the pyramids should be blown up, and that a city should be built in which the only language spoken should be Latin. Such immortality as pertains to the name of Maupertuis is due to this exquisite satire on "Dr. Akakia," the Greek equivalent for "the artless one."

NOTHING is more common in the present age, than for young and ignorant authors to usher into the world, under well-known names, works unworthy

of the supposed writers. There are quacks in every profession. One of these impostors has had the impudence to assume the name of the president of a most illustrious academy, in order to vend some drugs of a very singular nature. It is certain that the respectable president is not the author of the books which are ascribed to him; for that admirable philosopher, who has discovered that nature always acts by the most simple laws, and that she is ever sparing in the means she employs, would surely have spared his few readers the trouble of reading the same thing twice, first in his "Works," and then in his "Letters." At least one-third of the latter volume is copied literally from the former. This great man, who is so far removed from all suspicion of imposture, would never have published letters which were written to nobody, and far less would he have fallen into certain blunders which are excusable only in a young author.

Though I am fully convinced in my own mind that it is not regard for the interests of my profession that now induces me to speak; yet I may take the liberty, I hope, of finding fault with this writer for treating physicians as he does his booksellers. He proposes to starve us to death: he advises everyone to withhold his physician's fee, when unhappily the patient does not recover. "We do not pay," says he, "a painter that has made a bad picture." O, young man, how unjust and unreasonable you are! Did not the duke of Orleans, regent of France, pay dearly for the daubs with which Coypel adorned the gallery of the Palais Royal?

Does a client deprive his lawyer of his just fee because he has lost his cause? A physician promises his assistance, and not a cure. He does all that lies in his power, and is paid accordingly. What! would you even be jealous of the physicians?

What, think you, would that man say, who had, for instance, a pension of twelve hundred ducats for talking of mathematics and metaphysics, for dissecting a couple of toads, and having himself painted with a furred bonnet, should the treasurer accost him in this strain: "Sir, we must deduct one hundred ducats from your salary, for having written that there are stars in the shape of mill-stones; another hundred for saying that a comet will come and rob us of our moon, and even endanger the sun itself; and a hundred ducats more for having fancied that comets, composed entirely of gold and diamonds, will fall upon the earth: you are fined in three hundred ducats for having affirmed that the fœtus is formed in the womb of the mother by attraction; that the left eye attracts the right leg, etc. We cannot fine you in less than four hundred ducats, for having imagined that it is possible to discover the nature of the human soul by means of opium; and by dissecting the heads of giants, etc." It is evident that, by these means, the poor philosopher would lose the whole of his pension; and would he be content, think you, if, after this, the physicians should take it in their heads to laugh at him, and to affirm that rewards should be given to those only who write useful things, and not to such as are remarkable for nothing but an immod-

erate ambition of distinguishing themselves in the world?

This inconsiderate youth reproaches my brother physicians with being too timid and diffident in their researches. He says we are indebted to chance, and to savage, uncivilized nations for the only specifics that are known; and that the physicians have never discovered one of them. We must inform this stripling that it is chance alone that can teach us what medicines may be extracted from plants. Hippocrates, Boerhaave, Chirac, and Senac could never have guessed at first sight that the Jesuit's bark would cure a fever; that rhubarb was of a purgative, or poppies of a soporific nature. It is chance alone that can lead us to a discovery of the virtues of plants; and physicians can do no more than prescribe these medicines according to the condition of the patient. They have likewise invented several medicines by the assistance of chemistry. They do not promise to cure always; but they promise to do all in their power to mitigate the pains of their fellow-creatures. Did ever this witty youth, who has treated doctors with so much severity, perform such an important service to mankind as he, who, contrary to all expectation, brought back from the gates of death the marshal de Saxe, after the victory of Fontenoy?

Our young philosopher would have the physicians reduce themselves to a level with empirics, by banishing the theoretical part of their science entirely. What would you think of a man who should dissuade you from employing architects to build houses,

and advise you to make use of none but masons who cut stones at random?

He likewise gives us the wholesome advice to neglect the study of anatomy. In this case we shall have the surgeons on our side. We are only surprised that the author, who lies under some small obligations to the surgeons of Montpellier, for curing him of some diseases which require a very intimate knowledge of the interior parts of the head, and of other branches of anatomy, should be so extremely ungrateful.

The same author, little versed, it would appear, in history, speaking on the subject of making the punishment of criminals more useful to the state by trying experiments on their bodies, says that this scheme has never been carried into execution. He is ignorant, poor man, of what all the world knows, that in the reign of Louis XI. the experiment of cutting for stone was made for the first time in France, on the body of a man condemned to death; that the late queen of England caused them to try the inoculation of smallpox on four criminals; and that other examples of the same nature might be easily produced.

But, if our author is ignorant, it must be owned that he makes amends for that defect by the flights of a very singular imagination. He advises us, in his quality of physician, to employ the effects of the centrifugal force to cure an apoplexy, and would have us whirl the patient about as the boys do a whirligig. The notion, indeed, is none of his; but he gives it an air of novelty.

He advises us to cover the patient's body with resin, or to pierce his skin with needles. If ever he practises medicine and proposes such remedies, it is likely his patients will take his advice, and not pay their physician.

But what is very surprising is, that this declared enemy of the medical art, who would so unmercifully deprive us of our fees, proposes, by way of accommodation, to ruin the patients. He ordains — for he is despotic — that every physician should profess the cure of one disease only; so that, if a man has a gout, a fever, and a flux, sore eyes, and a pain in his ear, he must pay five physicians instead of one. But perhaps his meaning is, that each of us should have only a fifth part of the common fee; another instance of his malice. By and by, I imagine we shall hear of devotees being advised to have a particular director for every vice; one for a serious concern about trifles; one for jealousy, concealed under a severe and imperious air; one for the itch of forming cabals about nothing; and others for other vices: but let us not wander from the subject, but return to our brother physicians.

" The best physician," says he, " is he that reasons least." He seems to have adhered as strictly to this maxim in philosophy as ever Father Canaye did in theology; and yet, in spite of his hatred to reasoning, we can easily perceive that he has made some profound reflections on the art of prolonging life. In the first place, he agrees with all men of sense — and we sincerely congratulate him on agree-

ing with them for once — that our forefathers lived from eight to nine hundred years.

Having then discovered by the force of his own genius, and independent of Leibnitz, that "the full growth of a man should be fixed, not at the age of strength and manhood, but at the point of death," he proposes to ward off this point in the same manner as we preserve eggs, by hindering them from hatching. This, undoubtedly, is a most charming secret, and we would advise him to secure to himself the honor of the discovery in some hen-roost, or by a criminal sentence of some academy.

From this short account it plainly appears that if these imaginary letters were written by a president, it must have been by a president of Bedlam; and that they are, in fact, as we have already said, the work of a young man who has endeavored to set off his paltry production with the name of a philosopher respected, as is well known, over all Europe, and who has consented to have himself declared a "Great Man." We have sometimes seen at a carnival in Italy, Harlequin disguised in the garb of an archbishop; but we soon found it to be Harlequin by his manner of pronouncing the benediction: sooner or later, truth will prevail: this brings to my mind a fable of La Fontaine:

*Un petit bout d'oreille échappé par malheur*
*Découvrit la fourbe et l'arreur.*

Here we see the whole ears.

All things considered, we refer to the Holy Inquisition the book ascribed to the president; and we submit to the decisions of that learned tribunal,

in which, it is well known, physicians have the most implicit faith.

DECREE OF THE INQUISITION OF ROME.

We, Father Pancratius, etc., inquisitor for the faith, have read the dissertation of M. Akakia, physician in ordinary to the pope, without comprehending the meaning of the said dissertation, or finding anything in it contrary to the faith, or the Decretals. But we cannot say the same of the works and letters of the young anonymous author, who has assumed the name of a president.

After calling in the direction of the Holy Spirit to our assistance, we have found in the said works, that is, in the quarto volume of this anonymous author, many propositions rash, ill-sounding, heretical, or tending to heresy. We therefore condemn them collectively, separately, and respectively.

We especially and particularly anathematize the "Essay on Cosmology," in which the author, blinded by the principles of the children of Belial, and accustomed to blame everything, insinuates, contrary to the Holy Scriptures, that it is a fault in Providence to allow spiders to catch flies; and that there is no other proof of the being of a God than in Z equal to B C, divided by A plus B. Now these characters being drawn from the art of conjuring, and plainly diabolical, we declare them to be repugnant to the authority of the holy see.

And as, according to custom, we know nothing of physics, metaphysics, mathematics, etc., we have enjoined reverend professors of philosophy of the

College of Wisdom to examine the works and letters of the young anonymous author, and to give us a faithful account of the same. So help them God.

JUDGMENT OF THE PROFESSORS OF THE COLLEGE OF WISDOM.

1. We declare that the laws relating to the shock of bodies perfectly hard, are childish and imaginary, inasmuch as there are no bodies perfectly hard, though there are several hard minds, upon which we have in vain endeavored to make an impression.

2. The assertion that "the product of the space multiplied by the velocity is always a minimum," seems to be false; for this product is sometimes a maximum, according to the opinion of Leibnitz, and as may be easily proved. It would appear that the young author took only one-half of M. Leibnitz's ideas; and we, therefore, acquit him of the guilt of having ever comprehended one whole idea of M. Leibnitz.

3. We likewise adhere to the censure which M. Akakia, physician to the pope, and so many others, have passed on the works of this anonymous author, and especially on the "Venus Physique." We advise the young author, when he proceeds with his wife — if he has one — to the work of generation, not to think that the fœtus is formed in the womb by means of attraction; and we exhort him, if he commits the sin of the flesh, not to envy the lot of snails in the act of love, nor that of toads, and to be less ambitious of imitating the style of

Fontenelle, when riper years shall have formed his taste.

We come now to the examination of the "Letters," which, in our opinion, are doubly criminal, as they contain almost all that is to be found in the "Works"; and we exhort him not to sell the same goods twice under different names, because it is not consistent with the character of a fair trader, which he ought to maintain.

### EXAMINATION OF THE LETTERS OF A YOUNG AUTHOR DISGUISED UNDER THE NAME OF A PRESIDENT.

1. It may not be improper, in the first place, to inform this young author that foresight in man is not called Foreknowledge; that the word "*Foreknowledge*" is sacred to God alone, and denominates that power by which he looks into futurity. He should be acquainted with the meaning of words before he sets himself to write. He ought to know that the soul does not perceive itself; it sees external objects, but cannot see itself; such is its present condition. The young writer may easily correct these trifling errors.

2. It is false that "the memory makes us lose more than we gain by it." We must inform this candidate for literary fame that the memory is the faculty of retaining ideas; that without this faculty we could not even compose a bad book, could hardly know anything at all, would not be able to conduct ourselves in any station of life, but would be left in a state of absolute ignorance and stupidity. We

would, therefore, recommend this young man to improve his memory.

3. We are obliged to declare that the following notion is ridiculous, to-wit: "That the soul is like a body which recovers its former state after having been put in motion; and that in the same manner the soul returns to its state of tranquillity or uneasiness, whichever of the two be most natural to it." The author has not expressed himself with accuracy. He probably meant to say that everyone returns to his natural character; that a man, for instance, after having forced himself to act the philosopher for a few days, returns to his ordinary trifles, etc. But such trivial truths as these deserve not to be repeated. It is the misfortune of young men to think that they are capable of giving an air of novelty to the most common things, by wrapping them up in obscure expressions.

4. The author is mistaken in saying that extension is no more than a perception of the mind. If ever he applies himself to the study of philosophy, he will find that extension is not like sounds and colors, which exist only in our sensations, as every schoolboy knows.

5. With regard to the Germans, whom he undervalues and treats as dunces in plain terms, he appears to us, in this particular, to be unjust and ungrateful: this is not merely to want knowledge, it is to want politeness. This young man may probably imagine that he is capable of inventing something after Leibnitz; but we will tell him that it is

not to him that we are indebted for the invention of gunpowder.

6. This author, we are afraid, may tempt some of his fellow-students to search for the philosopher's stone; for he says "in whatever light we view it, we cannot prove it to be impossible." He owns, it is true, that it would be a foolish thing for any-one to squander away his estate in such a research; but as in talking of the "sum of happiness," he says that we cannot demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion, which, however, many people profess, it may happen *a fortiori* that some men may ruin themselves in searching for the grand secret, as according to him, it may possibly be found.

7. We pass over several things that would weary the reader's patience, and are unworthy of the inquisitor's notice; but we believe he will be greatly surprised to hear that this young student is for dissecting the brains of giants six feet high, and of hairy men with tails, the better to discover the nature of the human mind; that he proposes to modify the soul with opium and dreams; and that he undertakes to produce large snakes from other snakes with dough, and fishes with grains of corn. We have taken this opportunity of diverting the inquisitor.

8. But the inquisitor will not laugh when he is informed that every man may become a prophet; for the author finds no more difficulty in seeing the future than the past. He avers that the arguments in favor of judicial astrology are as strong as those against it. He then assures us that the perceptions

of the past, the present, and the future differ only in the greater or less activity of the soul. He hopes that a little more heat and "exaltation" in the fancy may serve to point out the future, as the memory shows the past.

We are unanimously of opinion that his brain is exalted to a very high degree, and that he will soon develop into a prophet. We cannot as yet determine whether he will be one of the greater or lesser prophets; but we are much afraid that he will prove a prophet of evil, since even in his treatise on happiness, he talks of nothing but calamities. He says, particularly, that all fools are unhappy. We send our compliments of condolence to people of this character; but if his exalted soul has looked into futurity, did it not perceive something ridiculous in the prospect?

9. He seems to be desirous of going to the southern hemisphere, though, on reading his book, one would be tempted to think that he had just returned from thence; and yet he appears to be ignorant that it is a long time since the country of Frederick Henry, situated beyond the fortieth degree of southern latitude, was discovered: but we assure him beforehand, that if, instead of going to the southern hemisphere, he should resolve to sail in a direct line to the north pole, nobody will embark with him.

10. We must further inform him, that it will be extremely difficult to make, as he proposes, a hole that shall reach to the centre of the earth — where he probably means to conceal himself from the disgrace to which the publication of such absurd

principles has exposed him. This hole could not be made without digging up about three or four hundred leagues of earth; a circumstance that might disorder the balance of Europe.

To conclude, we entreat Doctor Akakia to prescribe to him some cooling medicine; and we exhort the author to apply himself to his studies in some university, and to be more modest for the future.

Should ever a company of philosophers be sent to Finland, to verify, if possible, by certain mensurations, the grand discoveries which Newton made by his sublime theory of gravitation and centrifugal force, and should he happen to be one of the number, let him not endeavor to be always raising himself above his companions, nor cause himself to be painted as levelling the earth with his single hand, as Atlas is represented supporting the heavens on his shoulders; as if, forsooth, he had changed the face of the universe, because he had taken his diversion in a town where there was a Swedish garrison. Let him likewise abstain from quoting the polar circle on every occasion.

Should any of his fellow-students propose to him in a friendly manner an opinion different from his; should he assure him that he is supported by the authority of Leibnitz, and of several other philosophers, and particularly show him a letter of M. Leibnitz, which the novice flatly contradicts, let not the said novice rashly imagine, and give out in every place, that his antagonist has forged a letter of M. Leibnitz, to rob him of the glory of being an original.

Let him not take an error into which he has fallen, upon a point of dynamics, which is of no use in practice, for an admirable discovery.

Should this companion, after having frequently shown him his work, in which he attacks him with equal prudence and politeness, and in which he even pays him compliments, commit it to the press with his consent, let him take care not to represent this work of his adversary as a crime of academical treason.

Should his companion repeatedly assure him that he has in his possession this letter of Leibnitz, as well as several others, which he received from a man who has been dead for some years, let not the novice basely take advantage of this circumstance, nor employ the same artifices as were used by a certain person against the Mairans, the Cassinis, and other true philosophers: let him not demand in such a frivolous dispute that the dead should rise from the grave to ascertain the authenticity of a letter of M. Leibnitz; but let him reserve this miracle to the time of his commencing prophecy; let him not embroil people in an insignificant quarrel, which the vanity of the author would fain render important; nor let him presume to engage the gods in a war of rats and frogs. Let him not write letter upon letter to a great princess, in order to silence his antagonist, and to tie up his hands, that so he may assassinate him at pleasure.

Let him not, in a paltry dispute on dynamics, summon, by an academical authority, a professor to appear within a month; nor let him condemn the

said professor of contumacy, as an invader of his glory, as a forger and falsifier of letters; more especially as it is certain that the letters of Leibnitz are genuine, and that those written under the name of a president were no more received by his correspondents than they were read by the public.

Let him not endeavor to deprive anyone of the liberty of a just defence; but let him remember that he that is in the wrong, and that endeavors to dishonor him that is in the right, in effect dishonors himself.

Let him be persuaded that all men of letters are equal, and we are sure he will gain by this equality.

Let him never be so foolish as to insist that nothing should be printed without his order.

Finally, we exhort him to be of a teachable disposition, to apply to the study of sound philosophy, and not to vain cabals; for what a scholar gains in intrigues he loses in genius, in the same manner as in mechanics, what we gain in time we lose in power. We have but too frequently seen young authors, who have begun by raising high expectations and publishing excellent works, and end at last by writing nothing but nonsense; because instead of able writers they wanted to be skilful courtiers, substituted vanity in place of study, and that dissipation which weakens the mind, in place of that recollection which strengthens it. They have been commended, and they have ceased to be commendable: they have been rewarded, and they have ceased to deserve rewards: they have endeavored to make a figure in the world, and their names have

been entirely annihilated: for when in an author a sum of errors is equal to a sum of ridiculous propositions, "his existence is equal to nothing."

## HOW FAR SHOULD WE IMPOSE ON THE PEOPLE?

It is a question of great importance, however little regarded, how far the people, i. e., nine-tenths of the human race, ought to be treated like apes. The deceiving party have never examined this problem with sufficient care; and, for fear of being mistaken in the calculation, they have heaped up all the visionary notions they could in the heads of the party deceived.

The good people who sometimes read Virgil, or the "Provincial Letters," do not know that there are twenty times more copies of the "Almanac of Liège" and of the *"Courrier Boiteux"* printed than of all the ancient and modern books together. No one, surely, has a greater veneration than myself for the illustrious authors of these almanacs and their brethren. I know, that ever since the time of the ancient Chaldæans, there have been fixed and stated days for taking physic, paring our nails, giving battle, and cutting wood. I know that the best part of the revenue of an illustrious academy consists in the sale of such almanacs. May I presume to ask, with all possible submission and a becoming diffidence as to my own judgment, what harm it would do to the world were some powerful

astrologer to assure the peasants and the good inhabitants of the little villages that they might safely pare their nails when they please, provided it be done with a good intention? The people, I shall be told, would not buy the almanacs of this new astrologer. On the contrary, I will venture to affirm, that there would be found among your great geniuses many who would make a merit in following this novelty. Should it be alleged that these geniuses would form factions, and kindle a civil war, I have nothing further to say on the subject, but readily give up, for the sake of peace, my too dangerous opinion.

Everybody knows the king of Boutan. He is one of the greatest princes in the universe. He tramples under his feet the thrones of the earth; and his shoes — if he has any — are provided with sceptres instead of buckles. He adores the devil, as is well known, and his example is followed by all his courtiers. He, one day, sent for a famous sculptor of my country, and ordered him to make a beautiful statue of Beelzebub. The sculptor succeeded to admiration. Never was there such a handsome devil. But, unhappily, our Praxiteles had only given five clutches to his animal, whereas the Boutaniers always gave him six. This capital blunder of the artist was aggravated by the grand master of the ceremonies to the devil, with all the zeal of a man justly jealous of his master's rights, and of the sacred and immemorial custom of the kingdom of Boutan. He insisted that the sculptor should atone for his crime by the loss of his head. The

sculptor replied that his five clutches were exactly equal in weight to six ordinary clutches; and the king of Boutan, who was a prince of great clemency, granted him a pardon. From that time the people of Boutan were undeceived with regard to the devil's six clutches.

The same day his majesty needed to let blood. A surgeon of Gascony, who had come to his court in a ship belonging to our East India Company, was appointed to take from him five ounces of his precious blood. The astrologer of that quarter cried out that the king would be in danger of losing his life if he opened a vein while the heavens were in their present state. The Gascon might have told him that the only question was about the state of the king's health; but he prudently waited a few minutes; and then, taking an almanac in his hand, "You were in the right, great man!" said he to the astrologer of the quarter, "the king would have died had he been bled at the instant you mention: the heavens have since changed their aspect; and now is the favorable moment." The astrologer assented to the truth of the surgeon's observation. The king was cured; and by degrees it became an established custom among the Boutaniers to bleed their kings whenever it was necessary.

A blustering Dominican at Rome said to an English philosopher, "You are a dog; you say it is the earth that turns round, never reflecting that Joshua made the sun stand still." "Well! my reverend father," replied the other, "and since that time the sun has been immovable." The dog

and the Dominican embraced each other; and even the Italians were, at last, convinced that the earth turns round.

An augur and a senator, in the time of Cæsar, lamented the declining state of the republic. "The times, indeed, are very bad," said the senator; "we have reason to tremble for the liberty of Rome." "Ah!" said the augur, "that is not the greatest evil; the people now begin to lose the respect which they formerly had for our order: we seem barely to be tolerated; we cease to be necessary. Some generals have the assurance to give battle without consulting us; and, to complete our misfortunes, those who sell us the sacred pullets begin to reason." "Well, and why don't you reason likewise?" replied the senator, "and since the dealers in pullets in the time of Cæsar are more knowing than they were in the time of Numa, should not you modern augurs be better philosophers than those who lived in former ages?"

## TITLES OF HONOR.

In reading Horace, I have observed this verse in an epistle to Mæcenas: "*Te dulcis amice revisam*"—"I will see you again, my dear friend." This Mæcenas was the second person in the Roman Empire; that is, he was a more considerable and a more powerful man than the greatest monarch now in Europe.

In reading Corneille I have remarked, that in a letter to the great Scudéri, governor of Notre Dame de la Garde, he thus expresses himself, when speaking of the cardinal de Richelieu: "The cardinal, your master and mine." This, perhaps, is the first time that such a compliment was paid to a minister, ever since there were ministers, kings, and flatterers in the world. The same Peter Corneille, the author of "Cinna," humbly dedicates that play to the sieur de Montauron, treasurer of Spain, whom he makes no scruple to compare to Augustus. I am sorry he did not call Montauron "Monseigneur."

It is said that an old officer, who was but little acquainted with the forms of vanity, having written to the marquis de Louvois, "Monsieur," and received no answer, wrote to him "Monseigneur," and still obtained none, because the minister had still the "Monsieur" at heart. At last he wrote to him: "To my God, to my God, Louvois;" and began his letter with this address: "My God, my Creator." Does not all this prove that the Romans were great and modest, and that we are little and vain?

"How do you do, my dear friend?" said a duke to a gentleman: "At your service, my dear friend," replied the other; and from that time his dear friend became his implacable enemy. A grandee of Portugal, conversing with a grandee of Spain, always called him "Your Excellency." The Castilian replied: "Your Civility"—"*Vuestra Merced*"; a complimentary title given to those who have no real one. The Portuguese, piqued at this affront, called the Spaniard, in his turn, "Your Civility"; and then the other gave him the title of "Your Excellency." At last, the Portuguese, whose patience was quite exhausted, said to the other: "Why do you always give me the title of Civility, when I give you that of Excellency? And why do you call me Your Excellency, when I give you the appellation of Your Civility?" "Because," replied the Castilian, with great humility, "all titles are equal to me, provided there be no equality between you and me."

The vanity of titles was not introduced into the northern climates of Europe till the Romans became acquainted with the Asiatic sublimity. All the kings of Asia were, and still are, cousins-german to the sun and moon. Their subjects dare not lay claim to this alliance; and the governor of a province, who styles himself the "Nutmeg of Consolation, and the Rose of Pleasure," would be empaled should he pretend to be related, in the most distant degree, to the sun or moon. Constantine, I think, was the first Roman emperor that burdened the Christian humility with a string of pompous titles. It is true,

the title of god was given to the emperors before his time; but the word "god" had no such meaning then as we now affix to it. *Divus Augustus, Divus Trajanus,* meant no more than Saint Augustus, Saint Trajan. They thought the dignity of the Roman Empire required that the soul of its chief should go to heaven after death; and they frequently granted the title of Saint, or *Divus,* to the emperor, as an earnest of his future inheritance. It was nearly for the same reason that the first patriarchs of the Christian Church were called "Your Holiness"; an appellation given them to put them in mind of what they should be.

Some people will give themselves very humble titles, provided they are sure of receiving very honorable ones in return. An abbot who calls himself friar causes his monks to address him by the title of "My Lord." The pope styles himself "the Servant of the Servants of God." A good priest of Holstein, one day, wrote to Pope Pius IV.: "To Pius IV., the Servant of the Servants of God:" but going afterward to Rome to prosecute his suit, the Inquisition threw him into prison to teach him how to write.

Formerly none but the emperor had the title of Majesty: the other kings were called "Your Highness," "Your Serenity," "Your Grace." Louis XI. was the first king of France that was distinguished by the appellation of Majesty; a title, in reality, as suitable to the dignity of a great hereditary kingdom as to an elective principality: but the title of Highness was given to the king of France long

after his time, and we have still some letters, written to Henry III., in which he is addressed by this designation. The states of Orleans would not allow Queen Catherine de Medici to be called Majesty. By degrees, however, this last denomination prevailed. The name is indifferent; the power only is not so. The German Chancery, always invariable in its noble customs, still pretend that all kings ought to be distinguished by no other title than that of Serenity. In the famous Treaty of Westphalia, in which France and Sweden gave laws to the holy Roman Empire, the plenipotentiaries of the emperor never presented any Latin memorials in which "his Sacred imperial Majesty" did not treat with the "Most Serene kings of France and Sweden"; but the French and Swedes, on their part, did not fail to assert that their "Sacred Majesties of France and Sweden" had many causes of complaint against the "Most Serene emperor." At last all parties were made equal in the treaty. From that time the great sovereigns have been reckoned equal in the opinion of the people; and he that beats his neighbor is always sure to have the pre-eminence.

Philip II. was the first Majesty in Spain; for "the Serenity of Charles V." was exalted into Majesty only in virtue of his being emperor. The children of Philip II. were the first Highnesses, and they afterward became Royal Highnesses. The duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIII., did not take the title of Royal Highness till 1631, and then the prince of Condé took the title of most Serene Highness, which the dukes of Vendôme dared not

assume. The duke of Savoy had then the title of Royal Highness, and afterward obtained that of Majesty. The grand duke of Florence did as much, and almost arrived at Majesty: and, in fine, the czar, who was known in Europe only by the name of grand duke, declared himself emperor, and has been acknowledged as such.

There were formerly but two marquises in Germany, two in France, and two in Italy. The marquis of Brandenburg has become a king, and a great king; but French and Italian marquises are of a somewhat different nature. Let an Italian citizen have the honor of giving a dinner to the legate of his province, and let the legate in drinking to him say: "My lord marquis, your health," he and his sons are dubbed marquises forever. If a provincial in France, who has no other estate in his village than the fourth part of a small ruinous lordship, arrives at Paris, raises a small fortune, or has the appearance of having raised one, he entitles himself in his deeds, "High and mighty lord, marquis, or count;" and his son will be made by his notary, "Most high and most mighty lord;" and as this ridiculous ambition does no harm either to the government or to civil society, it is allowed to pass unnoticed. Some French lords boast of having German barons in their stables: some German lords say they have French marquises in their kitchens; and it is not long since a foreigner at Naples made his coachman a duke. In matters of this nature, custom is more powerful than the royal authority. If you are but little known at Paris, you may be

a count or a marquis as long as you please; but if you are a man of the long robe, or a collector of the revenues, and if the king give you a real marquisate, you will not on that account be esteemed a marquis. The famous Samuel Barnard was more truly a count than five hundred of those counts whom we daily see, and who do not possess four arpens of land. The king erected his estate of Coubert into a good earldom; and yet, if in a visit he had made himself known as Count Barnard, the company would have burst out laughing. The case is widely different in England. If the king gives a merchant the title of earl or baron, he presently receives from the whole nation the name which belongs to him. People of the first quality, and even the king himself, call him "My Lord." It is the same in Italy. They have there a register of lords. The pope himself gives them this title. His physician is a lord; and nobody finds fault with his dignity.

In France the "Monseigneur" is a terrible affair. A bishop, before the cardinal de Richelieu's time, was only "My most reverend father in God"; but when Richelieu was secretary of state, and still bishop of Luçon, his brethren, the bishops, in order to prevent their being obliged to give him this exclusive title of "Monseigneur," which the secretaries of state began to assume, agreed to give it to themselves. This step met with no opposition from the public. But as it was a new title which the king had not granted to bishops, they were still called in the edicts, declarations, decrees, and in everything that proceeded from the court, only

"Sieurs"; and the gentlemen of the council, in writing to a bishop, only called him "Monsieur." The dukes and peers met with more difficulty in putting themselves in possession of "Monseigneur." The grand nobility, and what is called the grand robe, flatly refused them this distinction. The highest triumph of human pride is to receive titles of honor from those who think themselves our equals; but it is difficult to arrive at this point; because we everywhere find that pride combats pride. When the dukes demanded that the poor gentlemen style them "Monseigneur," the presidents demanded the same from the advocates and procurators. We have known a president refuse to be bled because the surgeon said to him: "Sir, in which arm would you have me bleed you?" There was an old counsellor of the grand chamber who behaved with less ceremony. A pleader said to him: "My lord, the gentleman, your secretary —." The counsellor stopped him short, and said: "You have committed three blunders in three words; I am not a lord; my secretary is not a gentleman; he is my clerk."

In order to terminate this grand dispute of vanity, all the men of the nation must one day become "Monseigneurs," as all the women, who were formerly "Mademoiselle," are now become "Madame." When one Spanish beggar meets another, he says to him: "Seigneur, has your courtesy drunk chocolate?" This polite manner of expression elevates the soul, and preserves the dignity of the species.

Cæsar and Pompey were called Cæsar and Pompey in the senate. But these men did not know

how to live. They concluded their letters with "*vale*"—"farewell."

We were, about sixty years ago, "Affectionate servants": we are now become, "Most humble and most obedient"; and, "We have actually the honor to be" so. I pity our posterity, who will find it difficult to make any addition to these pretty forms. The duke d'Epernon, who exceeded all the Gascons in pride and haughtiness, but not in political abilities, wrote to the cardinal de Richelieu a little before his death, and concluded his letter with, "Your most humble and most obedient"; but recollecting that the cardinal had only given him, "Your most affectionate," he despatched a messenger to bring back the letter, which was already sent off, and having happily recovered it, he wrote "Your most affectionate," and thus died in the bed of honor.

## ON COMMERCE AND LUXURY.

Within the last twenty years commerce has been better understood in France than it had ever before been, from the reign of Pharamond to that of Louis XIV. Before this period it was a secret art, a kind of chemistry in the hands of three or four persons, who actually made gold, but without communicating the secret by which they had been enriched. The body of the nation were in such profound ignorance of this important secret that we had neither minister nor magistrate that knew what the words "annuities," "principal," "exchange," or "dividend" meant. It was destined that a Scotchman called John Law should come into France and overturn the whole economy of our government to instruct us. He had the courage, in the most horrible confusion of our finances, and in the time of a most dreadful famine, to establish a bank and an India company. This was giving a vomit to the sick; we took too much, and convulsions were the consequence: but, at length, from the ruins of his system, we had left us an India company, with a capital amounting to the sum of fifty millions of livres. What had been the case had we taken a moderate dose of that salutary medicine? In my opinion, the state had certainly been the most vigorous and powerful in the whole world.

There prevailed still among us, at the time when the present India company was established, a prejudice so very strong that the Sorbonne declared the

sharing of dividends of actions usurious. In the same manner the German printers, who came to establish their art in France, were, in 1570, accused of witchcraft.

We Frenchmen, there is no denying it, have come very late into everything. Our first steps in the arts have been to thwart the introduction of those truths which came to us from abroad: we defended theses against the circulation of the blood, after it had been demonstrated in England; against the revolution of the earth, which had been made evident in Germany; not even the most salutary remedies have escaped being proscribed by an arret. To discover any new truths, to propose anything of general use to mankind is a sure step to persecution. John Law, that Scotchman to whom we owe our India company, and all we know of commerce, was driven out of France, and died in misery at Venice; and yet, although we had scarcely three hundred merchant ships of any burden when he proposed his system, we have now — in 1738 — over eighteen hundred. Though we owe them all to him, we are yet exceedingly ungrateful to the memory of our benefactor.

The principles of commerce are known at present to all the world: we are beginning to have good books on that subject. The essay *"Sur le Commerce,"* of Melon, is the work of a man of sense, a good citizen, and an excellent philosopher: it has a tincture of the spirit of his age; and I do not think that even in the time of M. Colbert, there were two persons in France capable of producing

such a work. There are, however, a number of errors in that excellent book; so great progress as he has made in the road to truth was no easy matter: it is a service done to the public to point out the mistakes that happen in a useful book. It is indeed in such only we should look for them. It is showing respect to a good work to contradict it; a bad one does not deserve that honor.

The following observations are such as seem contrary to truth:

1. He says those countries in which are the greatest number of beggars are the most barbarous. I believe there is no city more civilized than Paris, and where at the same time there are more beggars. This is a vermin that attach themselves to riches; the drones run from the extremities of the kingdom to Paris, in order to lay opulence and good nature under contribution. This is an abuse difficult to root out, but which proves only that there are wretches in such a country, who prefer begging to getting their livelihood by honest industry. This may be a proof of wealth and negligence, but by no means of barbarity.

2. He repeats in several places that Spain would be more powerful without America. He grounds his observations on the depopulation of Spain, and on the weakness under which that state has long languished. This notion of America weakening Spain is to be met with in a hundred different authors. But had they given themselves the trouble to reflect that the treasures of America were the cement of the power of Charles V., and that by their

means Philip II. would have been master of Europe, if Henry the Great, Elizabeth, and the princes of Orange had not been heroes, those authors would have been of a different way of thinking. It has been imagined that the Spanish monarchy has been in a manner annihilated, because their kings Philip III., Philip IV., and Charles II. were either unfortunate or weak princes. But let us see how this monarchy has resumed new life under Cardinal Alberoni; let us cast our eyes toward Africa and Italy, those theatres of the conquests of the present Spanish government, and we shall be forced to own that nations are just what kings and ministers make them. Courage, fortitude, industry, every talent remains buried till some great genius appears, who rouses and sets them in motion. The capitol is at present inhabited by Recollets, and chaplets are now distributed on the spot where vanquished kings followed the chariot of Paulus Æmilius. Let but an emperor take up his residence in Rome, and let this emperor be a Julius Cæsar, every Roman will become a Cæsar with him.

As to the depopulation of Spain, it is not nearly so great as what it is given out to be: and even after all, this kingdom, and the states of America depending on it, are at this time so many provinces of the same empire, which are separated only by a space that may be sailed over in two months. In a word, their treasures become ours, by a necessary and unavoidable circulation. Their cochineal, their quinine, their mines of Mexico and Peru, are ours, and by the same means our manufactures are Span-

ish. Had America been a burden to them, is it to be thought they would have persisted so long in denying admittance into that country to strangers? Do people preserve with so much care the principle and source of ruin, after having had two hundred years to consider it?

3. He says that the loss of their soldiers is not the most fatal consequence in their wars; that a hundred thousand men are a very small number in comparison to twenty millions; but that an increase of taxes renders twenty millions of persons miserable. I will grant him twenty millions of souls in France; but I will not admit that it is better to have a hundred thousand soldiers cut to pieces than to put the rest of the nation to an additional expense in taxes. This is not all; here is a strange and fatal miscalculation. Louis XIV. had, reckoning the whole body of the marine, four hundred and forty thousand men in pay during the war in 1701. The Roman Empire never had such a numerous army on foot. It has been observed that about one-fifth of an army is destroyed by the end of a campaign by disease, accidents, fire, and sword. Here then are eighty-eight thousand men destroyed each year; therefore, at the expiration of ten years, the state has lost eight hundred and eighty thousand men, together with all the children they would have procreated in that time. At present, if France contains about eighteen millions of souls, take away about one-half for the women, together with all the old men, the children, the clergy, the monks, the magistrates, and those who are necessary

to carry on manufactures and to till the ground, what number remains for the defence of the nation? In eighteen millions you will hardly find eighteen hundred thousand men, and the war in ten years is supposed to have destroyed nearly nine hundred thousand. Thus the war destroys one-half a nation's men capable of bearing arms in her defence; and you say a new impost is more disastrous to a nation than the death of so many of her best people.

After correcting these inadvertencies, which the author would have corrected himself, permit me to consider what he has advanced on freedom of commerce, on manufactures, on exchange, and chiefly with regard to luxury. This wise apology for luxury is by so much the more estimable in this author, and has so much the more force from his mouth, as his life was that of a philosopher.

What then is luxury? It is a word without any precise idea, much such another expression as when we say the eastern and western hemispheres: in fact, there is no such thing as east and west; there is no fixed point where the earth rises and sets; or, if you will, every point on it is at the same time east and west. It is the same with regard to luxury; for either there is no such thing, or else it is in all places alike. Lead us back to those times when our grandfathers wore no shirts. Had anyone told them that they must wear finer and lighter stuffs than the finest cloth, white as snow, and must change them every day; and even after they were a little dirty must, with a composition prepared with great

art, restore them to their former lustre; everybody would cry out, "What luxury! What effeminacy! Such a magnificence as this is hardly sufferable in a king. You want to corrupt our manners and ruin the nation." Do they understand by luxury the expense of an opulent person? Must he then live like the poor, he whose profusion alone is sufficient to maintain the poor? Expensiveness should be the thermometer of a private man's fortune, as general luxury is the infallible mark of a powerful and flourishing empire. It was under Charlemagne, Francis I., and under the ministry of the great Colbert, and the present administration, that men lived at the greatest expense; that is to say, that the arts were encouraged and cultivated.

What would the tart, the satirical la Bruyére be at? What means this affected misanthrope, by crying out: "Our ancestors knew not what it was to prefer taste to utility; they were never known to light themselves with waxen tapers; this was a commodity reserved for the altar and the royal palace. They were never heard to say: 'Let my horses be put to my coach'; good pewter shone on their tables and side-boards; their silver was laid up in their coffers," etc. Is not this a very pleasant eulogium of our forefathers, to say they had neither taste, industry, neatness, nor plenty? Their silver was laid up in their coffers. Were this really true, it was certainly the greatest folly imaginable. Money is made for circulation, to bring the secrets of art to light, and to purchase the industry and labors of men: he who hoards it is a bad citizen, and even

a bad economist. It is by circulating it that we render ourselves useful to our country and to ourselves. Will men never grow weary of commending the follies of antiquity, with a view to ridicule the advantages of our own times?

This work of Melon has produced another by M. Dutot, which is preferable, both in point of depth and justness of reasoning. This work of M. Dutot is likely to give birth to another, which will probably carry the palm from both the others, as it is the production of a statesman. Never was the study of the belles-lettres so closely connected with that of the revenues, which is an additional merit in the age in which we live.

## MONEY AND THE REVENUES OF KINGS.

It is well known that every change in the money in the last reign was both burdensome to the people and hurtful to the interest of the king. In these, therefore, is there no case in which an augmentation of the money may become necessary?

In a state, for instance, that has but a small share of commerce, and as small a share of money—which has long been the case with France—if a lord shall possess an estate of a hundred marks a year, he is forced to borrow, in order to marry his daughters, or to carry on a war, a thousand marks, for which he is to pay fifty marks per annum. By this means his family is reduced to the annual expense of fifty marks for all charges. In the meantime the nation becomes more industrious, carries on a trade, so that money becomes more plenty. Then, as it never fails to happen, labor becomes dearer, so that the expense of luxuries, agreeable to the rank of this family, becomes double, treble, and even quadruple; while the corn, which is the sole resource of the country, does not increase in the same proportion, because people eat no greater quantity of bread than heretofore, though a great deal more is consumed in magnificence. What was formerly bought with fifty marks, now costs two hundred; so that the owner of land, who is now obliged to pay fifty marks of annuity, is obliged to dispose of his estate. What I now say of the lord, I say equally of the magistrate, the man of letters, and of the laborer: he buys

his pewter dishes, his silver cup, his bed, and his linen so much the dearer. In a word, the highest personage in the land is similarly situated when his revenues are no more than certain fixed demesnes, together with certain imposts, which he is afraid to increase, for fear of exciting murmurs among his people. In this pressing situation, there is certainly but one expedient left to ease the debtor. This may be done by abolishing his debts; this is the custom practised by the Egyptians and several other oriental nations, at the expiration of every fifty, and sometimes every thirty years. This custom was far from being so rigid as is imagined, the creditors having taken their measures accordingly, and a loss which was discernible so long beforehand can hardly be called a loss. Although this law is not in force with us, it was, however, found necessary to have recourse to it in effect, whatever roundabout methods were used to avoid it. For what is it, when one falls on a method to pay only the fourth part of what he owes, but a kind of jubilee? This was very easily discovered, by giving coins an arbitrary value, and saying, this piece of gold, which was in value six livres, shall from this day forward be valued at twenty-four; and whoever should owe four such pieces of gold, under the title of six livres each, would pay his debt by paying only one single piece of gold, which would be called twenty-four livres. As these operations were performed by insensible degrees, nobody was startled at the change. One who was both debtor and creditor gained on one hand what he lost on the other. Another carried

on trade; and a third was a sufferer, and was obliged to retrench.

In this manner all the nations of Europe have proceeded, before they had a regular and an extensive commerce. Let us examine the conduct of the Romans; we shall find that the *As,* the pound of copper of twelve ounces, was reduced to six liards of our present money. Among the English, the pound sterling of sixteen ounces of silver is reduced to twenty-two livres of our money. The pound gross among the Dutch is worth about twelve livres. But our livre is what has undergone the greatest change of them all.

In the time of Charlemagne we called the current coin equal in value to the twentieth part of a livre, a *"solide,"* from the Roman name of *"solidum";* this *"solide"* is what we now call a "sou," in the same manner as we barbarously designate the eighth month *août,* which we very politely pronounce *Ou;* so that in our exceedingly polite language, *hodieque manent vestigia ruris.* In short, this *"solide,"* or "sou," which was the twentieth part of a livre, and the tenth part of a mark of silver, is at this day no more than a penny piece of copper money, representing the nineteen hundred and twentieth part of a livre, silver being quoted at forty-nine livres the mark. This calculation is almost incredible; and it is found by this very calculation that a family that formerly should have had a hundred *"solides"* yearly rent, and who could have lived extremely well, would now have no more than five-sixths of a crown of six livres to spend yearly.

What does all this prove? Why this; that of all nations we have always been the most given to change, though by no means the happiest; that we have pushed the abuse of a law of nature, which requires the easing of debtors oppressed by the diminution of the value of money, to an enormous and most intolerable excess. Now, since M. Dutot has so well exposed the dangers of those sudden shocks which the change of the summary value of the coin occasions, it is to be hoped that, in an age so enlightened as ours, we run no risk of undergoing like disasters.

What most surprised me in M. Dutot's work, was to find him asserting that Louis XII., Francis I., Henry II., and Henry III. were richer than Louis XV. Who could have thought that Henry III., at the present rate of computation, at least had one hundred and sixty-three millions more revenue than our present king? I confess I have not yet been able to surmount my surprise. For how should Henry III., if he was actually possessed of such immense wealth, have found so much difficulty in opposing the Spaniards? How came he to be so oppressed by the Guises? How came France to lose her arts and manufactures? Why is it that no fine houses were built, no royal palace erected, no taste, nor the least symptoms of magnificence were then to be seen — those never-failing attendants of riches? At present three hundred fortresses, always in thorough repair, which strengthen and adorn our frontiers, and which are garrisoned with at least two hundred thousand men, are a certain proof of

the superiority of our wealth. The troops which compose the king's household may well be compared to the ten thousand, covered with gold and silver, which attended on the chariot of Xerxes and Darius. Paris contains twice the number of people, and is a hundred times more opulent than under Henry III. Commerce, which, if we had any, was in a most languishing and prostrate condition, now flourishes, to the vast emolument of the nation.

Since the last melting down of the coin, it has been found that upward of twelve hundred millions in gold and silver passed through the mint. It is found, by the sum of the stamp-duty on those metals, that there is in France about an equal quantity of bullion in wrought plate. It is true, those immense riches cannot be said to lessen the misery of the people in a year of dearth. But this is not the subject of our present inquiry: the question is, to know by what means, though the nation has become incomparably richer than in the preceding ages, the king has yet become actually poorer.

Let us first of all compare the riches of Louis XV. with those of Francis I. The public revenues then amounted to sixteen millions of nominal livres, which livre was to the present as one is to four and a half. Therefore sixteen millions of such livres were equal in value to seventy-two millions of our livres; whence it follows that with seventy-two millions only we should be as rich as at that period. But the revenues of the state are supposed to amount to two hundred millions: therefore Louis XV. is richer by one hundred and twenty-eight millions

than Francis I.; therefore, too, this prince is three times richer than Francis I., and in consequence draws from his people three times the money that Francis I. was able to do. This is very different from the calculation of M. Dutot.

He pretends, in order to prove his system, that commodities are fifteen times dearer than in the sixteenth century. Let us examine the price of commodities: we shall confine ourselves to the price of corn at the capital, one year with another. I find many years in the sixteenth century in which corn was fifty, twenty-five, twenty, and at eighteen sous, and even at four livres, from which I estimate the mean value at thirty sous. Wheat is now worth twelve livres: therefore commodities have increased in the proportion of eight times their former value, which is the same proportion as the increase of their value in England and Germany. But those thirty sous, of the sixteenth century, were worth five livres, fifteen sous of our present money. Now five livres fifteen sous make, excepting only five sous, one-half of twelve livres: wherefore Louis XV. actually is three times richer than Francis I., as he pays no more than twice the sum for commodities than was paid then. Now a person who has nine hundred livres, and buys a commodity for six hundred livres, will certainly remain richer by a hundred crowns than he who, being possessed of three hundred livres, buys the same commodity for three hundred livres: therefore Louis XV. remains richer by one-third.

But this is not all: instead of buying everything at double the price, he purchases soldiers, the most

necessary commodity of kings, at a much cheaper rate than any of his predecessors. Under Francis I. and Henry II. the strength of our armies consisted in a national gendarmerie, and in foreign infantry that cannot be compared in any respect to our present troops. But the infantry under Louis XV. is paid nearly on the same footing, that is, at the same price of numerary livres, as under Henry IV. The soldier sells his life and liberty at the rate of six sous a day, including his clothing: these six sous are equal to twelve in the time of Henry IV., so that with the same revenue as Henry the Great, we are able to maintain double the number of troops; and with double that sum, we can maintain four times that number. What I have said in this place suffices to show that, notwithstanding all the calculations of M. Dutot, our kings, as well as the state, are richer than formerly. I will not, however, deny that both are much deeper in debt.

Louis XIV. left at his death upward of twice ten hundred millions of debt, at thirty livres the mark, because he would have, at the same time, five hundred thousand men in arms, two hundred ships of war, and build Versailles; and because, in the War of the Spanish Succession, his arms were long unprosperous; but the resources of France by much exceed her debts. A state which is indebted only to itself can never be impoverished, and even debts are a spur to industry.

## THOUGHTS ON THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.

I.

PUFFENDORF, and those who write like him on the interests of princes, make almanacs, which are defective even for the current year, and which next year are absolutely good for nothing.

II.

Who would have said at the Peace of Nimeguen, that Spain, Mexico, Peru, Naples, Sicily, and Parma would one day belong to the house of France?

III.

Could anyone foresee at the time that Charles XII. governed Sweden with despotic sway that his successors would have no more authority than the kings of Poland?

IV.

The kings of Denmark were doges about a century ago; at present they are absolute.

V.

The Russians in former times sold themselves like the negroes; at present they have such a high opinion of their own merit that they will not admit foreign soldiers into their army, and they reckon it a point of honor never to desert; but they must still employ foreign officers, because the nation has not

yet acquired so much skill as courage, having only learned to obey.

VI.

Animals accustomed to the yoke offer themselves to it of their own accord. Some obscure compiler of the letters of Queen Christina has offered an insult to the common sense of mankind by justifying the murder of Monaldeschi, who was assassinated at Fontainebleau by order of a Swedish lady, under the excuse that this lady had once been queen. None but the assassins employed by her could have had the impudence to allege that that princess might lawfully do at Fontainebleau what would have been a crime at Stockholm.

VII.

That government would be worthy of the Hottentots in which a certain number of men should be allowed to say: "Those who labor ought to pay; we ought to pay nothing, because we are idle."

VIII.

That government would be an insult both to God and man in which the citizens might say: "The state has given us all we possess; and we owe it nothing but prayers."

IX.

The more reason is improved, the more does it destroy the seeds of religious wars. It is the spirit of philosophy that has banished this plague from the earth.

X.

Were Luther and Calvin to return to the world, they would make no more noise than the Scotists and the Thomists. The reason is, they would appear in an age when men begin to be enlightened.

XI.

It is only in times of barbarity that we see sorcerers, and people possessed by evil spirits, kings excommunicated, and subjects absolved from their oath of allegiance by doctors.

XII.

There is a convent in the world, entirely useless in every respect, which enjoys an income of two hundred thousand livres. Reason shows that if these two hundred thousand livres were given to a hundred officers who should marry, there would be a hundred useful citizens rewarded, a hundred young women provided for, and at least four hundred persons more in the state at the end of ten years, instead of fifty sluggards. It further shows that if these fifty sluggards were restored to their country they would cultivate the earth and people it; and that of course there would be more laborers and soldiers. This is what is wished for by everyone, from the prince of the blood to the vine-dresser. Superstition alone opposed it formerly; but reason, acting in subordination to faith, ought to crush superstition.

XIII.

A prince, by a single word, can at least prevent young people from making vows before the age of twenty-five; and should anyone say to the sovereign: "What will become of young ladies of rank, whom we commonly sacrifice to the eldest sons of our families?" the prince may reply: "They will become what they are in Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, England, and Holland; they will produce citizens; they were born for propagation, and not to repeat Latin, which they do not understand. A woman that nourishes two children and spins is more useful to the state than all the convents in the world."

XIV.

It is a great happiness both to the prince and the state that there are a number of philosophers who impress these maxims on the minds of the people.

XV.

Philosophers, having no particular interest, can only speak in favor of reason and of the public good.

XVI.

Philosophers love religion; and are useful to kings by destroying superstition, which is always an enemy to princes.

XVII.

It was superstition that occasioned the assassination of Henry III., of Henry IV., of William, prince of Orange, and of so many others. To it we ought

to ascribe the rivers of blood that have been shed since the time of Constantine.

XVIII.

Superstition is the most dreadful enemy of the human race. When it rules the prince, it hinders him from consulting the good of his people; when it rules the people, it makes them rebel against their prince.

XIX.

There is not a single example in history of philosophers opposing themselves to the laws of the prince. There never was an age in which superstition and enthusiasm did not occasion commotions that fill us with horror.

XX.

Liberty consists in depending upon the laws only. In this view every man is free in Sweden, England, Holland, Switzerland, Geneva, and Hamburg. The case is the same in Venice and Genoa; though in these two places whoever does not belong to the body of the nobles is despised and contemned. But there are still many provinces, and large Christian kingdoms where the greater part of the people are slaves.

XXI.

A time will come in these countries when some prince, more accomplished than his predecessors, will make the laborers of the land sensible that it is not wholly for their interest that a man who has

one horse, or several horses, that is, a nobleman, should have a right to kill a peasant, by laying ten crowns on his grave. Ten crowns, it is true, is a very considerable sum to a man born in a certain climate; but in process of time people will have the sagacity to discover that it is of little use to a dead man. The commons then may possibly be admitted to a share in the administration; and the form of government which prevails in England and Sweden may, perhaps, be established in the neighborhood of Turkey.

XXII.

A citizen of Amsterdam is a man; a citizen a few degrees of longitude from there is a beast of burden.

XXIII.

All men are born equal; but a native of Morocco never dreams of such a truth.

XXIV.

This equality does not destroy subordination. As men, we are all equal; as members of society we are not. All natural rights belong equally to the sultan and to a Bostangi. Both of them may dispose with the same freedom of their persons, their families, and their effects. Thus in things essential all men are equal, though they play different parts on the theatre of the world.

XXV.

People are always asking what is the best form of government. Put this question to a minister or to

his deputy; they will doubtless be for absolute power. Put it to a baron; he would have the baronies have a share in the legislative power. The bishops will say the same. The citizen would have you consult reason, and the peasant would not wish to be forgotten. The best government seems to be that in which all ranks of men are equally protected by the laws.

XXVI.

A republican is always more strongly attached to his own country than a subject is to his; and for this good reason, too, that men have a greater regard for their own property than for that of their master.

XXVII.

What is love of our country? A compound of self-love and prejudice, which the good of society has exalted into the chief of the virtues. It is of great consequence that this vague term, "the public," should make a deep impression.

XXVIII.

When the lord of a castle or the inhabitant of a city blames the exercise of absolute power, and complains of the oppression of the peasants, believe them not. Few people complain of evils which they do not feel. Besides, the citizens and gentlemen seldom hate the person of their sovereign, except in a civil war. What they hate is absolute power in the fourth or fifth hand: it is the antechamber of a deputy or of a secretary of an intendant that occa-

sions their murmurs: it is because they have received a rebuff from an insolent valet in the palace that they groan in their desolate fields.

XXIX.

The English reproach the French with serving their masters cheerfully. The following verses are the best that have ever been written in England on that subject:

A nation here I pity and admire;
Whom noblest sentiments of glory fire,
Yet taught by custom's force, and bigot fear,
To serve with pride, and boast the yoke they bear:
Whose nobles born to cringe, and to command,
In courts a mean, in camps a generous band,
From priests and stock-jobbers content receive
Those laws their dreaded arms to Europe give:
Whose people vain in want, in bondage blessed,
Though plundered gay, industrious though oppressed,
With happy follies rise above their fate;
The jest and envy of a wiser state.

In answer to all these declamations with which English poetry, pamphlets, and sermons are filled we may observe that it is very natural to love a house which has reigned for nearly eight hundred years. Several foreigners, and among these some Englishmen, have come to settle in France, merely for the sake of living happily.

XXX.

A king who is never contradicted can hardly be bad.

XXXI.

Some English peasants who have never travelled farther than London imagine that the king of France, when he has nothing else to do, sends for a president, and by way of amusement gives his estate to a valet of the wardrobe.

XXXII.

There are few countries in the world where the fortunes of individuals are more secure than in France. When Count Maurice de Nassau was setting out from The Hague, in order to take upon him the command of the Dutch infantry, he asked me if the French would confiscate the rents which he had a right to receive from the Town-House of Paris. "They will pay you," said I, "exactly on the same day with Count Maurice de Saxe, who commands the French army;" and my prediction was literally fulfilled.

XXXIII.

Louis XI. in the course of his reign sent about four thousand of his subjects to the gallows, because he was not absolute, and wanted to be so. Louis XIV., after the affair of the duke de Lauzun, did not banish a single courtier, because he was absolute. In the reign of Charles II. more than fifty persons of consequence lost their heads at London.

XXXIV.

In the reign of Louis XIII. there was not a single year passed without some faction or other. Louis

the Just began by causing his prime minister to be assassinated. He suffered the cardinal de Richelieu, who was more cruel than himself, to bathe the scaffolds with blood.

Cardinal Mazarin, though placed in the same circumstances, did not put a single person to death. A foreigner as he was, he could not have supported himself by acts of cruelty. If Richelieu had had no factions to contend with, he would have raised the kingdom to the highest pitch of grandeur, because his cruelty, which proceeded from the haughtiness of his temper, having no object to employ it, would have suffered the natural greatness of his soul to operate in its full extent.

XXXV.

In a book full of profound reflections and ingenious flights of fancy, despotism is reckoned among the natural forms of government. The author, who was a great wit, surely meant to rally.

There is no government naturally despotic. There is no country in the world where the people say to one man: "Sir, we give your sacred majesty the power of taking our wives, our children, our goods, and our lives, and of causing us to be empaled according to your good pleasure and your adorable caprice."

The Grand Turk swears on the Koran to observe the laws. He cannot put anyone to death without a decree of the divan, and a fetfa of the mufti. He is so little despotic that he can neither change the value of money, nor break the janissaries. It is not

true that he is master of the effects of his subjects. He bestows lands, which are called "timariots," in the same manner as fiefs were formerly bestowed.

XXXVI.

Despotism is the abuse of monarchy, as anarchy is the abuse of a republican form of government. A sultan, who, without the forms, and in violation of the laws of justice, imprisons or murders his subjects, is a public robber, dignified with the title of Your Highness.

XXXVII.

A modern author says there is more virtue in republics, and more honor in monarchies.

Honor is the desire of being honored. To be a man of honor is to do nothing unworthy of honor. We cannot say of a recluse that he is a man of honor. That expression is applied to signify that degree of esteem which every member of society would have paid to his own person. We must settle the meaning of terms, without which we shall soon be involved in such confusion that we shall no longer be able to understand one another.

In the time of the Roman Republic, this desire of being honored with statues, crowns of laurel, and triumphs rendered the Romans conquerors of the greater part of the world. The spirit of honor was kept alive by the empty form of a ceremony, by a leaf of laurel or parsley.

But when the republic was abolished, this kind of honor was likewise extinguished.

XXXVIII.

A republic is not founded on virtue: it is founded on the ambition of every citizen, which checks the ambition of others; on pride restraining pride; and on the desire of ruling, which will not suffer another to rule. Hence are formed laws which preserve as great an equality as possible. It is a society where the guests eat at the same table with an equal appetite, until a strong and voracious man comes, who takes all to himself, and leaves them only the crumbs.

XXXIX.

Little machines do not succeed in the main, because their operations are interrupted by the friction of the wheels. The case is the same with states. China cannot be governed like the republic of Lucca.

XL.

Calvinism and Lutheranism are in danger in Germany; that country is full of great bishoprics, sovereign abbacies, and canonries, all proper for making conversions. A Protestant prince turns Catholic in order to become a bishop, or king of a certain country, as a princess does in order to get a husband.

XLI.

If ever the Romish religion regains its former ascendency, it will be by the allurement of rich benefices, and by means of the monks. The monks

are troops that are perpetually fighting; the Protestants have no troops.

XLII.

It is pretended that religions are made for climates. But Christianity has long existed in Asia. It began in Palestine, and it has penetrated as far as Norway. The Englishman, who said that religions had their birth in Asia, their grave in England, reasoned much better.

XLIII.

It must be owned there are some ceremonies and mysteries which cannot take place but in certain climates. People bathe in the Ganges at the new moons; but were they obliged to bathe in the Vistula in the month of January, this act of religion would not be long in force.

XLIV.

It is alleged that Mahomet's law prohibiting the use of wine is a law of the climate of Arabia, because, in that country, wine would coagulate the blood, and water is refreshing. It would have been just as reasonable to make an eleventh commandment in Spain and Italy, enjoining the inhabitants to ply the bottle.

Mahomet did not forbid wine, because the Arabians loved water. It is said in the *"Sonna,"* that he forbade it, because he had been a witness of the shocking excesses which drunkenness occasioned.

XLV.

All religious laws are not the effect of the nature of the climate. To eat, standing, a boiled lamb with lettuce, and to throw the remainder of it into the fire; not to eat a rabbit, because it has not a cloven foot, and because it chews the cud; to sprinkle one's left ear with the blood of an animal: all these ceremonies have little connection with the nature of the climate.

XLVI.

If Leo X. had permitted indulgences to be sold by the Augustine monks, who were wont to sell such merchandise, he would have had no Protestants. If Anne Boleyn had not been beautiful, England had still professed the Romish religion. To what was it owing that the Spaniards were not all Arians, and afterward Mahometans? To what was it owing that Carthage did not destroy Rome?

XLVII.

From one given event to deduce all the events in the world is a fine problem; but it belongs only to the Sovereign of the universe to solve it.

## DIALOGUE

### BETWEEN THE INTENDANT DES MENUS AND THE ABBE BRIZEL.

Not long ago, a counsellor of the order of advocates being consulted by a person of the comedian order, who desired to know what degree of censure they incur who have a fine voice, noble gesture, feeling, taste, and all the talents requisite for speaking in public, the counsellor examined the affair[1] according to the order of law. The order of the Convulsionaries having laid this work before the order of the grand chamber which sits at Paris, this latter issued an order to the hangman to burn the consultation, as if it had been a bishop's mandate, or a book composed by a Jesuit. I flatter myself that it will do the same honor to the conversation of the indendant des menus and the abbé Brizel. I was present at that conversation; I have collected it with the utmost exactness, and I here present the public with an abstract of it, which every reader that has common sense may extend as he thinks proper.

"I put the case," said the intendant des menus to the abbé Brizel, "that we had never heard of plays before the age of Louis XIV. I put the case that that prince had been the first that caused dramatic pieces to be exhibited; that he had caused *'Cinna.' 'Athalie,' and 'Le Misanthrope,'* to be

[1] The work of this counsellor, which turned very much upon order, was complained of by M. Le Dain, and burned at the bottom of the stairs.

composed and represented by noblemen and ladies, before all the ambassadors of Europe; I ask, if it would ever have entered into the head of the curate La Chétardie, or the curate Fantin, both known in the world by the same adventures, or into that of any other curate or monk, to excommunicate these noblemen, these ladies, and Louis XIV. himself, to refuse them the sacraments of marriage and burial?" "No, doubtless," answered the abbé Brizel, "such an absurdity could never have entered into the head of any man living." "I will go still farther," said the intendant des menus; "when Louis XIV. and his whole court danced upon the stage, when Louis XIV. danced with so many young noblemen of his own age, do you think they would have been excommunicated?" "You jest," said the abbé Brizel, "we are great fools, I own, but not enough so to imagine such an absurdity."

"But," said the intendant, "you have excommunicated the pious abbé d'Aubignac, Father Bossu, the superior of St. Genevieve, Father Rapin, the abbé Gravina, Father Brumoy, Father Porce, Madame Dacier, and all who have taught the arts of tragedy and epic poetry according to the laws of Aristotle." "We are not yet fallen into such an excess of barbarism," answered Brizel; "it is true, the abbé de la Coste, M. de la Solle, and the author of 'The Ecclesiastical Gazette,' maintain that theatrical declamation, music, and dancing are mortal sins; that David was permitted to dance nowhere but before the ark, and that neither David, Louis XIV., nor Louis XV. ever danced for money; that

the empress of Germany never sang but in the presence of a few grandees of her court; and that there is no pleasure in excommunicating any but those who are gainers by speaking, singing, and dancing in public."

"It is then evident," said the intendant, "that if there was a tax called that of the king's recreations, and if the expenses of them were to be paid by that tax, the king would incur the penalty of excommunication, at the pleasure of any priest who should think proper to launch his thunder at the head of his most Christian majesty."

"You puzzle me, excessively," said Brizel.

"I will push the matter home," said Menus; "not only Louis XIV., but Cardinal Mazarin, Cardinal de Richelieu, Archbishop Trissino, and Pope Leo X. were at considerable expense in causing tragedies, comedies, and operas to be represented. The people contributed toward these expenses; yet I cannot find in the history of the Church, that any vicar of St. Sulpice has for this excommunicated Pope Leo X. and these cardinals.

"Why then was Mademoiselle Lecouvreur carried in a hackney coach to the corner of Burgundy Street? Why was Romagnesi, a player belonging to our Italian company, buried upon the high road, like an ancient Roman? Why was an actress belonging to the dissonant choruses of the Royal Academy of Music kept three days in her own cellar? Why are all these persons to be burned by a slow fire till the great day of judgment, without having bodies; and why are they, after that day, to be burned to all

eternity when they have found their bodies again? It is for no other reason, you will say, but because a pit ticket costs twenty sous.

"Yet those twenty sous do not change the nature of things: they are neither better nor worse in themselves whether the twenty sous are paid or not. A *'de profundis'* has equal power to deliver a soul out of purgatory, whether it be skilfully sung for ten crowns, harshly chanted for twelve livres, or sung as the Psalms are, gratis. It follows then, that there is nothing more diabolical in *'Cinna'* or *'Athalie'* when they are represented for twenty sous, than when the king causes them to be played for the amusement of his court. Now if Louis XIV. was not excommunicated when he danced for his diversion, nor the empress when she played in an opera, it does not appear to be just that those should be excommunicated who give us these entertainments for money by the permission of the king of France, or the empress."

The abbé Brizel felt the force of this argument; he made this answer: "There are ways of compromising matters; it is wisely ordered that all should depend upon the arbitrary will of a curate or a vicar. We are so happy and so wise as to have no fixed rule in France. Nobody would venture to bury the illustrious and inimitable Molière in the parish of St. Eustache; but he had the happiness to be carried to St. Joseph's chapel, according to our excellent and healthy custom of making charnel-houses of our churches. It is true, St. Eustache is so great a saint that it would have been improper

to have caused the body of the infamous author of *'Le Misanthrope'* to be carried thither: but St. Joseph afforded some consolation; it was consecrated ground even there. There is an immense difference between consecrated ground and profane; the first is, without comparison, the most light; and then the value of the ground is increased in proportion to that of the man. That in which Molière was interred has acquired reputation. Now as this man was buried in a chapel, he cannot be damned, like Mademoiselle Lecouvreur and Romagnesi, who were buried upon the highway. Perhaps he is punished in purgatory for having written "Tartuffe"; I would not venture to swear to the contrary; but I have no doubt of the salvation of Jean Baptiste Lulli, fiddler to the king's sister, king's musician, superintendent of the king's music, who played in *"Cariselli"* and *"Pourceaugnac,"* and was, moreover, a Florentine; he is gone to heaven as surely as I shall go thither myself; that is evident, for he has a fine marble monument at St. Eustache's church: he was not thrown upon a dung-hill: fortune rules the globe." Thus reasoned the abbé Brizel, and his reasoning must be allowed to be strong

The intendant des menus, who is well versed in history, replied as follows: "You have, doubtless, heard of the reverend Father Girard; he was a sorcerer; nothing can be more certain. It is well attested that he bewitched his penitent by flogging her. Nay, more, he breathed upon her as all sorcerers do. Sixteen judges declared Girard to be

a magician; yet he was buried in consecrated ground. Tell me, now, why should a man that was both a Jesuit and a sorcerer have all the honors of sepulture notwithstanding? and why should Mademoiselle Clairon be deprived of them, if she should happen to die immediately after playing Paulina, who makes her exit in order to be baptized."

"I have already told you," answered the abbé Brizel, "that that is arbitrary. I should be very ready to bury Mademoiselle Clairon if there was anything considerable to be got by it; but some curates might possibly make a scruple to do so; in such a case, no one would think of making a disturbance in her favor, and of making a sort of appeal to parliament as though on account of an abuse. His majesty's comedians are, generally speaking, citizens descended of poor families: their relations have neither money nor credit sufficient to succeed in a lawsuit; the public does not concern itself about them; it enjoyed the talents of Mademoiselle Lecouvreur, during her life; suffered her to be treated like a dog after her death, and looked upon all this as a mere jest.

"The example of sorcerers is a great deal more serious. It was formerly certain that there were sorcerers; it is now certain that there are none, in spite of sixteen judges of Provence, who thought Girard so extraordinary a personage. Excommunication still subsists notwithstanding. If you have no sorcerers, it is so much the worse for you; we shall not change our rituals because the world has changed; we resemble Pourceaugnac's physician,

we must have a patient, and we take the first that offers.

"Excommunication extends even to grasshoppers; grasshoppers they are; it is a sad case, I own, that the Church should continue to stigmatize them, for they make a jest of excommunication. I have seen clouds of them in Picardy; it is very dangerous to offend great companies, and to expose the thunders of the Church to the contempt of persons in power; but as to three or four hundred poor comedians scattered up and down through the kingdom of France, there is nothing to fear from treating them like grasshoppers, and those who play tricks of legerdemain.

"I shall now tell you something still more to the purpose: M. Intendant, are you not the son of a farmer-general?" "No, sir," said the intendant, "that was my uncle's place; my father was receiver-general of the finances, and both were secretaries to his majesty, as well as my grandfather." "Well then," replied Brizel, "your uncle, your father, and your grandfather, are excommunicated, anathematized, damned to all eternity; and whoever has the least doubt of this, is an impious wretch, a monster, in a word, a philosopher."

M. Intendant, hearing this, did not know whether he should laugh at the abbé or beat him; he however chose rather to laugh. "I wish, sir," said he to Brizel, "you would be so good as to show me the bull or decree of council that damns the receivers of the king's finances, and those who are concerned in the king's five great farms." "I will produce

twenty councils," said Brizel; "I will do more, I will show you a passage in the Gospel which declares that every receiver of king's money is placed in the class of Pagans; and you will find by the ancient constitutions that they were not suffered to enter the Church in its early centuries. *'Sicut Ethnicus et Publicanus'*—'as a Gentile and a publican,' is a passage well known; the ecclesiastical law has admitted of no change upon this head; the anathema thrown out against tax-gatherers, against receivers of the public money, was never revoked. Would you then have that revoked which was launched, in the earliest centuries, against actors who played the *'Œdipus'* of Sophocles; an anathema which is still in force against those who no longer play the *'Œdipus'* of Corneille. Begin with bringing your father, your grandfather, and your uncle out of hell; and then we will do what we can for his majesty's comedians."

"You talk madly, M. Brizel," said the intendant; "my father was the chief person in his parish, he is buried in his own chapel; my uncle erected to his memory a marble mausoleum, as fine as Lulli's; and if his curate had ever talked to him of *Ethnicus et Publicanus,* he would have had him thrown into a ditch. I do not doubt but St. Matthew might have damned tax-gatherers, though he had been one himself, or that they stood at the church doors in ancient days; but you must own that, in the present times, nobody would venture to tell us so to our faces; and that if we are excommunicated, it is only *incognito.*"

"You have hit it," said Brizel: "we leave the

*Ethnicus et Publicanus* in the Gospel; we no longer open the ancient rituals, and we live in peace with the farmers-general, provided they pay well for receiving the sacrament."

M. Intendant was somewhat appeased, but he could not digest the *Ethnicus et Publicanus*. "I entreat you, my dear Brizel," said he, "to tell me why that satirical stroke was inserted in your books, and why we were so ill-treated in the early ages." "That is no difficult matter," said Brizel: "those who pronounced this excommunication were poor people, and most of them Jews; about a quarter of the number consisted of Greeks; the Romans were their masters; the receivers of tribute were either Romans, or elected by the Romans; there could not be a more infallible method of drawing in the populace than by anathematizing the officers of the revenue: conquerors, masters, and tax-gatherers are always hated. The populace run after folks who preach up equality of conditions, and damn the farmers of the revenue: exclaim in the name of the Most High against powers and taxes, the mob will certainly declare for you, if you are not stopped in your career; and when a sufficient number of those of the lower class is devoted to you, then men of abilities will not be wanting to put saddles upon their backs, bits in their mouths, and to ride them till they have subverted states and thrones: then they will erect a new building, but they will preserve the old stones, though rude and unformed, because they were of service before, and are dear to the people; they will be added to the

new marble, the gold and the precious stones will be afterward lavished; and there will be always bearded antiquaries who will prefer the old rubbish to the new marble.

"This, sir, is the succinct history of what has passed among us. France was a long time immersed in barbarism; and even now that it begins to be civilized, there are still among us persons attached to the ancient barbarism. We have, for example, a small number of virtuous people, who would willingly deprive the farmers-general of all their wealth condemned by the Gospel, and deprive the world of an art as noble as innocent, which the Gospel never forbade, and which none of the apostles have spoken of. But the sensible part of the clergy leaves the financiers to jog on to the devil in peace, and only suffers the comedians to be damned for mere matter of form." "I understand," said the intendant des menus; "you take care not to offend the financiers, because they invite you to dinner; you fall upon the comedians because they never invite you. Do you forget, sir, that the comedians receive the king's pay, and that you cannot excommunicate an officer of the king for doing his duty? You are not therefore to excommunicate a comedian of the king's, who plays *'Cinna'* or *'Polyeucte'* by his special command."

"And where did you learn," said Brizel, "that we have not power to damn one of the king's officers? I suppose from the rights of your Gallican Church. But are you ignorant that we excommunicate even kings themselves? We proscribed

the great Henry IV., Henry III., and Louis XII., the father of his people, while he called a council at Pisa; Philip the Fair, Philip Augustus, Louis VIII., Philip I. and the pious King Robert, though he had burned so many heretics; know that we have it in our power to anathematize all princes, and to cause them to die suddenly; consider that, and then complain, if you will, that we fall upon a few theatrical princes."

The intendant des menus, somewhat nettled, interrupted him, and said: "You may excommunicate my masters as you please, but they will know how to punish you; but reflect that it is I that go to his majesty's comedians with his orders to come and damn themselves before him: if they are out of the pale of the Church, I am out of it also; if they are guilty of a mortal sin, in drawing tears from virtuous men by acting in virtuous pieces, it is I who give occasion to that sin; if they go to the devil, it is I that conduct them to hell. I receive the order from the first gentlemen of the chamber, they are more guilty than I; the king and queen, who command them to act for their instruction and delight, are yet a hundred times more guilty. If you cut off soldiers from the body of the Church, you must inevitably at the same time cut off the officers and the generals; you will never extricate yourself out of this difficulty. Do but reflect in what an absurdity you involve yourself; you suffer citizens in his majesty's service to be thrown to the dogs, while at Rome, and in all other countries,

they are treated honorably during their lives and after their deaths."

Brizel answered, "Do you not see that it is because we are a grave, serious, consistent people, in every respect superior to the inhabitants of other countries? One-half of Paris has embraced the sect of Convulsionaries; people of this stamp should check those libertines who are satisfied with obeying the king, who do not control his actions, who love his person, who cheerfully supply him wherewithal to support the dignity of his throne, who, after having discharged their duty, pass their lives with tranquility in cultivating the arts; who respect Sophocles and Euripides, and who damn themselves by living like people of virtue and sense.

"This world, I must acknowledge, is composed of knaves, fanatics, and idiots, among whom there is a little separate society called Good Company; this little society being rich, well bred, knowing, and polite, is, as it were, the flower of human kind; for this society elegant pleasures are intended; the greatest men have exerted their talents for their pleasure; it is they that give reputation, and, to tell you all, it is this society that despises us, while it behaves politely to us whenever we fall in its way. We all endeavor to gain admittance to this small number of select persons, and, from the Jesuits to the Capuchins, from Father Quesnel to the scoundrel who composes the 'Ecclesiastical Gazette,' we assume a thousand forms, in order to acquire some credit with this small number, of which it is impossible for us ever to be. If we find any lady weak

enough to listen to us, we persuade her that it is absolutely necessary to have white cheeks in order to go to heaven, and that red is highly displeasing to the saints in Paradise. The lady leaves off painting, and we squeeze money out of her.

"We love to preach because chairs are hired at church; but how can it be expected that people of taste should listen to a tedious discourse, divided into three articles, while they have their minds full of the beautiful passages of *'Cinna,' 'Polyeucte,'* the *'Les Horaces,' 'Pompée,' 'Phèdre,'* and *'Athalie!'* This exasperates us.

"We enter the house of a lady of quality; we ask the company's opinion of the last sermon of the preacher at St. Roc; the lady's son answers us by repeating some lines of Racine. We then ask them whether they have read the theological tract entitled, 'The Work of Six Days?' We are told in return, that a new tragedy has just appeared. In fine, the time is approaching when we shall have no longer any influence except over the rabble. This piques us; and when we are in an ill humor, we excommunicate as many as we are able.

"The case is not the same at Rome, and in the other states of Europe. When a fine mass has been sung at St. John of Lateran, or St. Peter's church, with grand choruses in four parts, and when twenty castrati have sung a hymn with quavering voices, all is ours; those who composed the congregation go in the evening to drink chocolate at the opera of St. Ambrose, and nobody takes umbrage at this. Churchmen take care not to excommunicate la Sig-

nora Cuzzoni, la Signora Faustina, la Signora Barbarini, and above all Signor Farinelli, knight of Calatrava, and actor of the opera, who is possessed of diamonds as big as my thumb.

"In that country persons in power never persecute; this is the reason why a king who is never opposed always proves a good king, if he does not want common sense. All the mischief is done by low wretches who endeavor to domineer. These alone persecute with a view of acquiring importance. The pope is so powerful in Italy that he has no occasion to excommunicate persons of worth, possessed of talents which challenge esteem; but there are creatures in Paris with flat hair and mean understandings, who find it necessary to make themselves considerable by such means. If they do not form cabals, if they do not preach up rigid tenets, if they do not declaim against the elegant arts, they are overlooked in the crowd. Passengers take no notice of dogs except when they bark, and it is the desire of all to be taken notice of. The jealousy and rivalry of professions have great influence over this world. I have divulged our secret; don't reveal what I have said, and do me the favor to procure me a box in the lettice at the first tragedy of M. Collardeau."

"That you shall have," said the intendant des menus; "but make a complete discovery of your mysteries. Why is there not one of those with whom I have conversed upon this subject, who will agree with me that the excommunication of a society paid by the king is the highest insolence and absurd-

ity? And at the same time why does nobody make an effort to put an end to this scandalous abuse?"

"I think I have already answered you," said Brizel, "by owning, that we swarm with contradictions. France, to speak seriously, is the region of wit and folly, of industry and sloth, of philosophy and fanaticism, of gayety and pedantry, of laws and abuses, of just taste and impertinence. The ridiculous contrast between the renown of the tragedy of *'Cinna,'* and the infamy of those that represent it; the right possessed by the bishops of having a box to themselves at the representation of *'Cinna,'* and their right of anathematizing the actors, the author and the spectators, must be allowed to form an inconsistency worthy of the folly of this people; but produce me an instance of one human establishment that is not contradictory.

"Tell me why, since the apostles were all circumcised, and the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem circumcised, you are not also circumcised? Why can you with impunity eat puddings, though the prohibition to eat them was never cancelled? Why should the successors of the apostles who earned their bread by their labor, wallow in riches and honors? Why, though St. Joseph was a carpenter, and though his divine son stooped to learn that trade, has his vicar driven out the emperors, and without ceremony taken their place? Why have those who asserted that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, been excommunicated and anathematized during a succession of ages? And why are those now damned who think

the contrary? Why is a second marriage expressly forbidden in the Gospel to those whose first marriage has been annulled, and why do we permit second marriages in this case? Tell me, how comes it to pass, that the same marriage that is declared null and void at Paris, is still in force at Avignon?

"To turn our conversation to the theatre, of which you are so fond, explain to me the reason why you applaud the brutal and factious insolence of Joad, who causes Athalie to be beheaded because she was desirous of having her grandson Joas educated at her own court, at the same time that if a priest among us was to make any such attempt upon those of the royal family, there is not a soul that would not condemn the delinquent to capital punishment?

"Custom regulates all things; dancing, for example, has been, in almost all nations, a religious ceremony; the very Jews danced through devotion. If the archbishop of Paris was to take it into his head to dance a minuet at high mass, people would laugh at it as much as at his certificates of confession; sacramental acts are still represented at Madrid upon holy days. A comedian plays Jesus Christ; another plays Satan; an actress represents the Holy Virgin; another, Mary Magdalen at her toilet; Harlequin repeats the Ave Maria; Judas says his paternoster.

"During these representations, they sometimes, with great ceremony, burn the descendants of our good father Abraham; and while the poor wretches roast, they gravely sing to them pious ballads, com-

posed by one of their kings, and translated into bad Latin. Notwithstanding all this, there is as much good sense, politeness, and wit at Madrid as at any court in Europe.

"Horses at Rome receive a benediction; were we to cause our stables at St. Genevieve to be blessed, half Paris would exclaim against the scandal."

## OBSERVATIONS ON HISTORY.

Will public authors never cease to give us false conceptions of the past, the present, and the future? In their opinion, surely, mankind must have been born to be deceived; with so much confidence do they pretend, even in this enlightened age, to obtrude upon us the fables of Herodotus; nay, and fables which even Herodotus himself would not have dared to impose upon the Greeks.

How much wiser are we for being so frequently told that Menes was the grandson of Noah? and with what appearance of justice can we affect to ridicule the genealogies of Moréri, while we ourselves compose others no less ridiculous? Noah, it is affirmed, sent his children to travel into foreign parts; his grandson, Menes, into Egypt; his other grandson into China; I know not what other grandson into Sweden; and a younger descendant still into Spain. Travelling, in those days, must have improved the minds of young gentlemen much more than it does at present. The moderns, in the course of ten or twelve centuries, have hardly been able to acquire an imperfect knowledge in geometry; but these ancient travellers had no sooner arrived in those uncultivated countries, than they began to foretell eclipses. Certain it is that the authentic history of China contains calculations of eclipses for about four thousand years. Confucius mentions thirty-six computations of the same nature, all of which, except four, the mathematical missionaries

have found to be just. But these facts do not puzzle the writers who have been pleased to make Noah the grandfather of Fo-hi; because they are resolved that nothing shall puzzle them.

Other admirers of antiquity would make us believe that the Egyptians were the wisest people in the universe; because, forsooth, they paid an extreme deference to their priests; and yet it is well known that the wise priests and legislators of these wise people worshipped monkeys, cats, and onions. We may extol the works of the ancient Egyptians as much as ever we please; such of them, however, as still remain, are at best but shapeless blocks, the finest of their statues not being comparable to the most indifferent of our ordinary artists. The Egyptians must certainly have learned the art of sculpture from the Greeks, there never having been a masterly performance produced in Egypt that did not proceed from the hand of a Greek. The Egyptians, it is said, were profoundly skilled in astronomy: the four sides of a great pyramid are opposed to the four quarters of the world; is not that a convincing proof of the truth of the assertion? But were the Egyptians equal to our Cassinis, our Halleys, our Keplers, or Tycho Brahes? These good people told Herodotus, with great gravity, that in eleven thousand years, the sun had set twice in the same place as it rose. Such was their astronomy!

It cost, according to M. Rollin, fifty thousand crowns to open and shut the sluices of Lake Mœris. This author is very dear with his sluices; and, besides, his calculations are false. There is no sluice

— unless it be a very bad one indeed — that may not be opened and shut for a crown: but it cost, he says, fifty talents to open and shut these sluices. It must be observed, that in the time of Colbert, a talent was equal to three thousand French livres. Rollin, however, is not aware, that since that period, the current value of our specie is nearly doubled; and that therefore, the expense of opening the sluices of Lake Mœris must have been, according to his computation, about three hundred thousand livres, which is almost two hundred and ninety-seven thousand livres more than enough. All the other calculations in his thirteen volumes seem to be equally inaccurate. The same author affirms, after Herodotus, that in Egypt, a country not nearly so extensive as France, there was a standing army of four hundred thousand men, every one of whom had a daily allowance of five pounds of bread, and two pounds of flesh. This last article makes eight hundred thousand pounds of flesh a day for the soldiers alone, in a country where they hardly eat any flesh at all. Besides, to whom belonged these four hundred thousand soldiers, while Egypt was divided into several petty principalities? But this is not all; we are further told, that every soldier had six acres of land free from taxes. Two millions four hundred thousand acres of ground that paid nothing to the state! and yet this poor and petty state maintained a greater army than is nowadays maintained by the grand seignior, who is master of Egypt, and other territories ten times more extensive than it. Louis XIV., it is true, had four hundred thousand

men in arms for some years; but that was an extraordinary and unnatural effort, and that effort ruined France.

Would people but take the pains to consult their reason, instead of their memory, and to examine rather than transcribe, we should not see books and errors multiplied without end: nothing would then be committed to writing that had not the recommendation at once of novelty and of truth. The qualification in which historians are commonly defective is a true philosophical spirit; most of them, instead of discussing matters of fact with men, content themselves with telling tales to children. Should the fable of Smerdis's ears, or that of Darius, who gained a kingdom by the neighing of his horse, or that of Sennacherib, whose army was miraculously destroyed by rats; should such fables as these, I say, be reprinted in the present age? If men will still repeat such improbable stories, let them at least represent them as no better than they really are.

Is it allowable for a man of sense, born in the eighteenth century, to entertain us with a serious discourse concerning the oracles of Delphos; one while to tell us that this oracle prophesied that Crœsus would boil a sheep and a tortoise in a tortoise shell; at another, to inform us that battles were won agreeable to the prediction of Apollo, and to assign as the cause of these events the great power of the devil? M. Rollin, in his "Ancient History," undertakes the defence of oracles against Van Dale, Fontenelle, and Basnage. "With regard to M.

Fontenelle," says he, "his book against oracles, drawn from Van Dale, is to be considered merely as a youthful performance." This decree, I am afraid, of Rollin's old age against Fontenelle's youth, will be reversed at the bar of reason, where it seldom happens that rhetoricians gain their cause, when they enter the lists with philosophers. To be convinced of this, we need only attend to what Rollin has said in his tenth volume, where he means to speak of physics. He there alleges that Archimedes, in order to demonstrate the surprising effects of the mechanical powers, to his good friend, the king of Syracuse, ordered a galley, doubly loaded, to be placed on the solid earth, and then pushed it gently into the stream with one finger, without so much as coming out of his chariot. This, it is plain, is the language of a rhetorician; had he had the least smattering of philosophy, he would at once have perceived the absurdity of what he asserts.

If we would improve the present time to the best advantage, we should not squander away our lives in brooding over ancient fables. I would advise a young man to acquire a slight knowledge of these remote ages; but I would have him begin the serious study of history at that period where it becomes truly interesting to us, which, in my opinion, is toward the end of the fifteenth century. From that era history is rendered more authentic, chiefly by means of the art of printing, which was then unknown. The general face of Europe was known; the Turks, who overspread it, banished polite literature from Constantinople, but it flourished in Italy;

it was established in France, and it went to polish the rude manners of the Germans, the English, and other northern nations. A new religion delivered one-half of Europe from papal subjection. A new system of politics took place; by the help of the mariner's compass, the Cape of Good Hope was doubled, and the trade between Europe and China was rendered more easy than that between Paris and Madrid. America was discovered; a new world was conquered, and our own was almost totally changed: the Christian nations of Europe became a kind of immense republic, in which the balance of power was established on a more sure and solid foundation than it had ever been in ancient Greece. A perpetual intercourse unites all the parts of this vast body together, in spite of the wars excited by the ambition of kings, and even in spite of religious wars, which are still more destructive. The arts, which are the glory of every nation, were carried to a degree of perfection which they never attained in Greece and Rome. This is the history which every man should know: in this you will find no chimerical predictions, no lying oracles, no false miracles, no stupid fables; in this everything is true, almost to the most minute circumstances, about which, however, none but little souls will give themselves great concern. To us everything relates, everything contributes, to our advantage. The plate from which we eat, our furniture, our wants, our new pleasures all conspire to remind us that America, the East Indies, and, as a consequence, the whole world, has, within these two centuries and a half,

been reunited by the industry of our forefathers. We cannot take a single step that does not recall to our memory the great change which has lately been brought about in the world. Here are a hundred cities which were formerly subject to the pope, but which are now free. There have been established, at least for a time, the privileges of the Germanic body: here is formed the most perfect republic in a country, which is every moment in danger of being swallowed up by the sea; England has united true liberty with royalty: Sweden copies the glorious example; but her sister, Denmark, has not the prudence to follow the same course. If I travel into Germany, France, or Spain, I everywhere find traces of that inveterate quarrel, which has subsisted so long between the houses of Austria and Bourbon; houses united by so many treaties, all which have been productive of the most cruel and bloody wars. There is not a single man in Europe, whose fortune has not, in some measure, been influenced by those great revolutions. And does it become us after this to trifle away our time with Shalmaneser, and Mardokempad, and with curious but useless inquiries concerning the anecdotes of Cayamarrat the Persian, and of Sabaco Metophis. No man, surely, when arrived at the age of maturity, and engaged in the management of weighty and important affairs, will sit down to relate the tales of his nurse.

NEW REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY.

I doubt not that the same change which has lately happened in physics may soon take place in the

manner of writing history. New discoveries have banished the old systems. One would wish, too, to study the characters of mankind with all that interesting particularity of circumstance, which now constitutes the foundation of natural philosophy.

We now begin to give little credit to the adventure of Curtius, who shut up a gulf, by throwing himself and his horse into the opening; the shields which came down from heaven, and all the pretty talismans which the gods were wont, with so much liberality, to present to mankind; the Vestals, who set a ship afloat by the charm of their girdle: in a word, the whole group of those famous fooleries, with which ancient histories are stuffed, are now the objects of ridicule and derision. In the same light we consider what M. Rollin has related, with so much gravity, in his ancient history, of King Nabis, who complimented all those who gave him money, with the enjoyment of his wife, and placed such as refused to contribute, in the arms of a handsome doll, resembling the queen exactly in outward appearance, but armed, under her petticoats, with sharp iron points. Who, when he hears so many authors repeating, one after another, that the famous Otho, archbishop of Mentz, was besieged and devoured by an army of rats, in 698; that Gascony was deluged with showers of blood in 1017; and that two armies of serpents fought a battle near Tournay, in 1059: who, I say, on hearing such improbable stories as these, can refrain from laughing? Prodigies, predictions, and fiery trials are now held in the same

degree of credit and estimation as the fables of Herodotus.

I next mean to treat of modern history; in which you will find no dolls embracing courtiers, no bishops devoured by rats.

Some people take great pains — and not without reason — to mark the precise day on which a battle was fought. They relate every article of a treaty; they describe the pomp and solemnity of a coronation, the ceremony of receiving a cap, and even the entry of an ambassador, without forgetting either his Swiss or lackeys. It is very proper that public records should be kept of everything, that so we may be able to consult them on occasion; and indeed I consider all our large books at present as so many dictionaries. But after having read the descriptions of three or four thousand battles, and the substance of some hundreds of treaties, I do not find myself one jot wiser than when I began; because from them I learn nothing but events. The battle of Charles Martel gives me no more insight into the characters of the French and Saracens than does the victory which Tamerlane gained over Bajazet into those of the Turks and Tartars. I own indeed, that when I read the memoirs of Cardinal de Retz, and of Madame de Motteville, I know every word of what the queen-mother said to M. de Jersay; I see how the coadjutor assisted in raising and strengthening the barricades; and I could almost make an abstract of the long conversations which he had with Madame de Bouillon. This serves very well to gratify my curiosity; but contributes little

to my instruction. There are some books that contain the true or false anecdotes of a court. Whoever has seen courts, or is desirous of seeing them, is as fond of these illustrious trifles, as a country lady is of hearing the news of the paltry village from which she came.

At bottom both are guided by the same principle; and the motive that actuates the one is as noble as that which influences the other. Under the reign of Henry IV. the anecdotes of Charles IX. were the subject of conversation; and during the first years of Louis XIV. the duke de Bellegarde was the favorite topic of discourse. All these trifles are preserved for an age or two, and then sink into eternal oblivion.

But the misfortune is, that in order to attain this superficial kind of knowledge, we neglect studies infinitely more useful and important. I want to know what was the strength of a nation before a war, and whether that war contributed to increase or diminish its strength. Was Spain richer before the conquest of the new world than it is at present? How much more populous was it in the time of Charles V. than in that of Philip IV.? Why was it that Amsterdam, about two centuries ago, hardly contained twenty thousand souls? Why, at present, does it contain two hundred and forty thousand, and what is the most accurate method of determining the difference? How much more populous is England now than it was under Henry VIII.? Is it true — as is alleged in the "Persian Letters" — that the earth wants inhabitants; and that it is depopu-

lated in comparison to what it was some two thousand years ago? Rome, it is true, contained at that time many more citizens than it does at present. I acknowledge, too, that Alexandria and Carthage were great cities; but Paris, London, Constantinople, Grand Cairo, Amsterdam, and Hamburg were not then in being. There were three hundred nations in ancient Gaul; but these three hundred nations were not equal to ours, either in number of men, or in the knowledge and practice of the arts of peace. Germany was formerly a forest, now it is covered with a hundred opulent cities. One would be almost tempted to think that the spirit of invective, wearied with persecuting individuals, had attacked the whole of humankind. The constant and general complaint is that the world daily becomes at once more vicious and less populous. Have we any reason to regret our not having lived in those times, when there was no highway from Bordeaux to Orleans, and when Paris was a small village, the inhabitants of which were perpetually cutting one another's throats? People may say what they will, but Europe certainly contains more men than it did formerly, and these men are more active and industrious. One may easily know how much Europe has increased in population during the course of any number of years; for in almost all your great cities, a list of the births is published at the end of the year; and according to the sure and accurate method lately laid down by a Dutch gentleman, equally ingenious and indefatigable, one may calculate the number of people from that of the births.

This then will be a principal object of attention to everyone that would read history like a citizen and philosopher. But he will take care not to confine his attention to this particular alone; he will inquire what has been the prevailing virtue and vice of a nation; why it has been powerful or weak at sea; and how and in what degree it has been enriched during the course of a century; these last two articles may be fully ascertained from the list of exportations. He will endeavor to learn how the arts and manufactures have been established, and will trace them through all their windings and turnings, in their progress from one country to another. In a word, the revolutions in the manners of the people and in the laws of the land will be the great object of his most serious study and attention. Thus, instead of obtaining a partial knowledge of the history of kings and courts, he will acquire a thorough insight into the characters of mankind.

In vain do I read the annals of France; all our historians are silent with regard to these interesting particulars. None of them have chosen for their motto, *"Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto."* We should then, in my opinion, artfully interweave these useful inquiries with the general texture of events. This appears to me to be the only method of writing modern history like a true politician and a true philosopher. To write ancient history is, in effect, to mix a few truths with a thousand falsehoods. Perhaps the use of this history is much the same as that of ancient fables; the great events

which it contains are the constant subjects of our paintings, our poems, our conversation; and from them, too, we derive the grand outlines of morality. We should read the adventures of Alexander, as we do the labors of Hercules. In fine, ancient history seems to have the same relation to modern that old medals have to the current coin; the former are deposited in the cabinets of the curious, the latter circulates through the world for the use and convenience of mankind.

But to undertake and execute such a work, the author must be possessed of several kinds of knowledge besides that of books; he must be encouraged by the government, as much, at least, for what he may perform, as were the Boileaus, the Racines, and the Valincourts, for what they never performed; so that what a witty clerk of the treasury said to these gentlemen may never be applicable to him: "We never saw anything belonging to them but their seals."

### THE SCEPTICISM OF HISTORY.

Incredulity, let us remember, according to Aristotle, is the foundation of all knowledge. This maxim should be attended to by all those who read history, and especially ancient history. What an infinite number of absurd facts! what a confused heap of incoherent fables that shock the common sense of mankind! Of these do not believe a single syllable. There were kings, consuls, and decemvirs in Rome; the Romans destroyed Carthage; Cæsar vanquished Pompey; all this is true. But when

you are told that Castor and Pollux fought for that people; that a Vestal set a loaded ship afloat by the touch of her girdle; that a gulf was shut up by Curtius throwing himself into it; do not believe one word of it. You everywhere read of prodigies, of predictions accomplished, of miraculous cures performed in the temple of Æsculapius; do not believe a word of them. But a hundred witnesses have signed the *procès-verbal* of these miracles engraved on tables of brass; and the temples were filled with votaries who attested these cures. That there have been knaves and fools who have attested what they never saw; that there have been devotees who have made presents to the priests of Æsculapius when their children have been cured of rheumatism; this you may believe; but with regard to the miracles of Æsculapius, do not believe a word of them.

But the Egyptian priests were all sorcerers, and Herodotus admires their profound skill in witchcraft: do not believe one word of what Herodotus tells you.

With me everything that is prodigious is incredible. But should I extend my incredulity to those matters, which, though within the ordinary course of human affairs, are nevertheless destitute of moral probability?

For instance, Plutarch assures us that Cæsar, completely armed, threw himself into the Sea of Alexandria, holding some papers which he was unwilling to wet, in one hand, and swimming with the other.

Do not believe a word of this story which Plutarch tells you. Rather believe Cæsar himself, who does not speak a word of it in his "Commentaries"; and be assured that when a man throws himself into the sea with some papers in his hand, he must necessarily wet them.

You will find in Quintus Curtius, that Alexander and his generals were surprised when they beheld the ebbing and flowing of the sea, a thing which to them was equally new and unexpected; do not believe a word of it.

It is probable enough that Alexander killed Clitus in a fit of drunkenness, and that he loved Hephæstion as Socrates loved Alcibiades; but it is extremely improbable that the disciples of Aristotle should be ignorant of the ebbing and flowing of the sea. There were philosophers in his army; it was sufficient to have been on the Euphrates, at the mouth of which there were tides, in order to be acquainted with this phenomenon. Alexander had travelled into Africa, the coasts of which are washed by the ocean. Is it possible that his admiral, Nearchus, could be ignorant of that which was known to every boy on the banks of the river Indus? Such stupid improbabilities, repeated by so many authors, have too much discredited the veracity of historians.

Father Maimbourg relates, after a hundred others, that two Jews promised the empire to Leo the Isaurian, provided that when he should be emperor, he would destroy images. What interest, pray, had these two Jews in hindering the Christians from having paintings? How could these two wretched

creatures promise the empire? Is it not offering an insult to the understanding of the reader, to entertain him with such fables as these?

It must be confessed, that Mézeray, in his stiff, low, and unequal style, intermixes with the ill-digested facts which he relates, many absurdities of the same nature. At one time it is Henry V. of England, who was crowned king of France at Paris, who died of the hemorrhoids for having presumed, says he, to seat himself on the throne of our kings; at another, it is St. Michael who appeared to Joan of Arc.

I do not believe even eye-witnesses, when they report things inconsistent with common sense. Sieur de Joinville, or rather he who has translated his Gallic history into ancient French, may assure me, if he will, that the emirs of Egypt, after having assassinated their sultan, offered the crown to St. Louis, their prisoner; they might as well tell me that we had offered the crown of France to a Turk. What likelihood is there that the Mahometans should ever think of choosing for their sovereign a man whom they could regard in no other light than as a leader of barbarians, whom they had taken in battle, who neither understood their laws nor their language, and who was the capital enemy of their religion?

I give no more credit to Sieur de Joinville, when he tells me this tale, than when he informs me that the Nile overflowed at St. Remy, in the beginning of October. I will likewise venture to call in question the story of the old man of the mountain, who,

upon report of a crusade undertaken by St. Louis, despatched two assassins to kill him at Paris; and, upon a fresh report of his extraordinary virtue, sent off next day two couriers to countermand his first orders. This account has too much the air of an Arabian fable.

I will boldly tell Mézeray, Father Daniel, and all the historians, that I do not believe a storm of rain and hail made Edward III. return to his right senses, and procured peace to Philip of Valois. Conquerors are not so devout, nor do they make peace on account of rain.[1]

[1] The greatest minds are often actuated by the most capricious motives. If we suppose that the soul of Edward III. was influenced either by the terrors of superstition or the sentiments of humanity, we shall see no reason to withhold our credit from this incident, which is recorded by all the historians. In the year 1360, Edward having invaded France, and filled that country with horror and devastation, while he was advancing at the head of his army, within two leagues of Chartres, was overtaken by a terrible tempest, which he considered as a dreadful visitation from heaven. The peals of thunder and flashes of lightning, intermingled with deluges of rain, smote the hearts of his best warriors with dismay: but what made the strongest impression upon Edward's own mind was the havoc occasioned by a terrible shower of hail, which in a moment laid a thousand of his best troops, and six times that number of horses, dead upon the spot. Deeply affected by the scene, he threw himself from his horse upon the ground, and stretching his hands toward the church at Chartres, solemnly vowed to God that he would seriously incline his mind to peace, if it could be obtained on equitable terms. Now we should be glad to know what circumstance of this transaction is incredible, or even

Nothing, to be sure, is more probable than crimes; yet they should at least be well attested. Mézeray makes mention of more than sixty princes who have been poisoned; but this he affirms without any proof; and a common report should be given as no better than a common report.

I will not even believe Titus Livius, when he tells me that the physician of Pyrrhus offered to poison his master, provided the Romans would pay him a certain sum of money. At that time the Romans had hardly any money at all; and Pyrrhus had wherewithal to purchase the republic, had it been exposed for sale. The place of first physician to Pyrrhus was probably more lucrative than that of consul. I will not believe such a story as this, until I find it indisputably proved that a first physician of one of our kings engaged to poison his patient, upon receiving a reward from a Swiss canton.

Let us likewise suspect whatever appears to be exaggerated. An innumerable army of Persians checked, at the Straits of Thermopylæ, by three hundred Spartans, does not stagger my faith; the situation of the ground renders the adventure probable. Charles XII., with eight thousand hardy

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improbable? We would ask M. de Voltaire whether he would not have had much more reason to doubt the abdication of Charles V., if the truth of the fact was to be determined by its credibility. We may once for all observe that nothing can be more absurd than the attempt to deduce from general canons the motives of particular actions, which depend upon such a variety of weakness, peculiarity, and caprice.

veterans, defeated at Narva about eighty thousand half armed Russians; I admire, I believe the action. But when I read, that Simon de Montfort, with nine hundred soldiers, divided into three bodies, beat a hundred thousand men, I then repeat: "I do not believe a word of it." I am told indeed that it was a miracle; but is it so very certain that God performed a miracle in favor of Simon de Montfort?[1]

I would call in question the battle of Charles XII. at Bendar, were it not sufficiently attested by many eye-witnesses, and did not the character of that prince render such a romantic instance of heroism extremely probable. That skepticism which we should entertain with regard to particular facts, we should likewise extend to the manners of foreign nations; let us refuse our belief to every historian, ancient and modern, who relates things contrary to nature, and to the general character of the human kind.

All the first accounts of America talk of nothing but anthropophagi, or man-eaters; and to read them, one would imagine that the Americans eat human flesh as commonly as we eat mutton. The truth, when fully known, amounts only to this,

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[1] Such exploits as these were often achieved by Europeans, both in the East and West Indies: nor are they at all surprising, if we consider that the few were trained up to arms and discipline, and their antagonists a rude multitude without order and regulation, unarmed, unsupplied with necessaries, unprovided with subordinate command, rash, obstinate, fanatic, and encumbered even by the greatness of their own number.

that a small number of persons were eaten by their conquerors, instead of being eaten by the worms.[1]

The new Puffendorf, as incorrect as the old one, says that in 1589, an Englishman and four women, having escaped from a shipwreck which they had suffered in a voyage to Madagascar, landed on a desert island; and that the Englishman labored with so much success, that in 1667, there were found on this island, which was called Pines, no less than twelve thousand handsome English Protestants.

The ancients, and their numerous credulous compilers among the moderns, are perpetually telling us, that at Babylon, the best regulated city in the universe, all the maids and married women prostituted themselves once a year in the temple of Venus. I can easily believe, that in Babylon, as in other places, a man might have a little pleasure for his money; but I can never allow myself to think that in a city, the best governed of any that were then in the world, all the fathers and husbands sent their daughters and wives to a market of public prostitution, and that this decent traffic[2] was carried on by

[1] If we may believe the most creditable historians who have written of America and Africa, the Caribbee Indians feasted on human flesh, and were even so dainty in this particular that the prisoners destined for the market were fattened and even castrated, to render them the more plump and delicious. All the caciques in South America, and Montezuma in particular, had dishes of human flesh served every day at their tables; and in the kingdom of Congo in Africa, human flesh used to be sold publicly in shambles.

[2] Is there anything more surprising in this circumstance than in the practice of the Romans (another polite people),

the express orders of the legislature. We every day see published a hundred stupid stories of the same kind, concerning the customs of the Orientals; and where we have one traveller like Chardin, we have many thousands like Paul Lucas.

Such, however, is not the history of Charles XII. On the contrary, I can assure the reader that if ever history deserved credit, this, in a particular manner, is entitled to that distinction. I composed it, as is well known, from the memoirs of M. Fabricius, of Messieurs de Villelongue, and de Fierville, and from the accounts of several eye-witnesses. But as these witnesses did not see everything, and sometimes saw things in a false light, I have been led, by their means, into more than one error; not indeed concerning the essential facts, but only with regard to some private anecdotes, which, however indifferent in themselves, serve as matter of triumph to the little critics.

I afterward corrected this history by the military journal of M. Adlerfeld, which is very accurate, and which assisted me greatly in rectifying some facts and dates.

I likewise perused the history written by M. Norberg, chaplain and confessor of Charles XII. This is a work very ill digested, and very badly written; it is crowded with a variety of trifling inci-

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who lent their wives to one another occasionally? Is this prostitution more repugnant to the laws of decorum than were the mysteries of the *Bona Dea,* or the orgies of the Bacchanalians among the Greeks, who were undoubtedly the most civilized nation in the known world?

dents foreign to the subject; and even the grand events are rendered trifling, by the insipid manner of relating them. It is a collection of such rescripts, declarations, and manifestoes, as are usually published in the name of kings, when they are at war. These neither serve to point out the causes of events, nor to give us more distinct ideas of military and political transactions; and besides, they are intolerably irksome to the reader. A writer can, at best, but consult them occasionally, in order to derive from them a little information; in the same manner as an architect makes use of rubbish in raising an edifice.

Among the public pieces, with which Norberg has interlarded his wretched history, there are some which are even false and absurd; such as the letter of Achmet, the Turkish emperor, whom this historian calls sultan pasha by the grace of God.

This same Norberg makes the king of Sweden say what that monarch never said, nor ever could say, in the affair of Stanislaus. He pretends that Charles XII. told the primate, by way of answer to his objections, that Stanislaus had gained a great many friends in his journey to Italy. Certain, however, it is, that Stanislaus never was in Italy, as that monarch himself has assured me. After all, what matters it whether a Pole, in the sixteenth century, travelled into Italy or not for his amusement? What an infinite number of useless facts ought to be retrenched from history, and how do I felicitate myself in having abridged the "History of Charles XII."

Norberg had neither judgment nor genius, nor a sufficient knowledge of the world; and it was for that reason, perhaps, that Charles XII. thought proper to choose him for his confessor. Whether he made that prince a good Christian or not, I will not take upon me to determine, but most undoubtedly he has not made him a hero; and the memory of Charles XII. would be buried in oblivion, were it not transmitted to posterity by abler historians than M. Norberg.

It may not here be improper to inform the reader that there appeared, some years ago, a small pamphlet, entitled "Historical and Critical Remarks on the History of Charles XII.," by M. de Voltaire. This little performance was composed from some anecdotes of Count Poniatowski. These contained his answers to some fresh questions which I had proposed to him on his last journey to Paris. But his secretary having taken a double copy of them, they fell into the hands of a Dutch bookseller, who did not fail to publish them; and the corrector of the press gave them the title of "Critical," in order to procure them a better sale. This is one of those petty larcenies, which are sometimes practised in the bookselling trade.

La Motraye, a domestic of M. Fabricius, has likewise published some remarks on this history. Among the errors and trifles with which this critique of la Motraye is filled, there are some things that are true and useful, and of these I have taken care to avail myself in the latter editions of my history, especially in that of 1739. A historian should neg-

lect nothing: he should, if possible, consult both kings and valets de chambre.

## A LETTER FROM VOLTAIRE TO A PROFESSOR OF HISTORY.

Sir: You must have perceived that the pretended "Universal History" printed at The Hague, and said to be carried down to Charles V. though it contains less than the title promises, by more than a whole century, was not originally intended to see the light. It is no other than a crude collection made in the course of old studies, in which I was engaged, about fifteen years ago, with a person of a most respectable character, far transcending her sex and the age in which she lived, whose understanding comprehended all sorts of erudition, and was reinforced by judicious taste, without which that erudition would have been insipid, and scarcely entitled to the name of merit.

I prepared that groundwork solely for her use and my own, as may be plainly seen by considering the beginning; it is an account which I freely recall of what I had been reading; the best method of learning and acquiring distinct ideas: for a bare reading alone leaves little more than a confused picture in the memory.

My principal aim was to trace the revolutions of the human understanding in those of governments.

I endeavored to discover in what manner so many bad men, conducted by worse princes, have notwithstanding, in the long run, established societies, in

which the arts and sciences, and even the virtues, have been cultivated.

I attempted to find the paths of commerce, that privately repairs the ruins which savage conquerors leave behind them; and I studied to know, from the price of provisions, the riches or poverty of a people: above all things, I examined in what manner the arts revived and supported themselves in the midst of such desolation.

The character of nations is strongly marked by poetry and eloquence. I translated passages from some of the ancient oriental poets; and still remember one from the Persian Sadi, upon the power of the Supreme Being, in which we see the same genius that inspired the Arabian, Hebrew, and all oriental writers; that is, more imagination than propriety; more of the fustian than the sublime: their diction is figurative, but their figures are often very ill arranged; their outbursts of imagination are hitherto vague and superficial; and they are utterly ignorant of the art of transition. This is the passage from Sadi in blank verse:

He knows distinctly that which never was;
His ear is filled with what was never heard;
A monarch he, that needs no kneeling slave;
A judge, that executes no written law;
With his omniscience, like a graver's tool,
He traced our features in each mother's womb:
From morn to eve he leads the sun along,
With rubies sows the mountain's mighty mass:
He takes two drops of water; one starts up
A perfect man, the other shines a pearl.
He spoke the word and Being sprung from naught:
His word the universe will quickly melt

Into the immensity of space and void:
His word will raise the universe again,
From depths of nothing to the plains of Being.

Sadi was a native of Bactriana, and contemporary with Dante, who was born in Florence in 1265, and whose verses did honor to Italy, even when there was not one good prose author among all our modern nations. This genius happened to rise at a time when the quarrels between the Empire and the Church had left rankling wounds in different states, as well as in the minds of men. He was a Ghibelline, consequently persecuted by the Guelphs; therefore we must not be surprised to find him venting his chagrin in his poem to this effect:

Two suns of old, in one united blaze,
Diffused their genial warmth and cheering rays,
That banished darkness, and displayed the road
Which leads bewildered man to truth and God.
The imperial eagle's rights were plainly shown,
And the lamb's separate privileges known:
But now no more that light congenial shines;
One, dimmed with vapors, from his orb declines;
With dusky flame and heat unhallowed teems,
Ambitious to eclipse the other's beams;
War, blood, contention, and confusion reign;
The lamb now roars, a lion on the plain,
Proud in his purple robes usurped appears,
And with the shepherd's crook the sovereign's sceptre wears.

I translated above twenty pretty long passages from Dante, Petrarch, and Ariosto; and with a view to compare the genius of a nation with that of her imitators, I culled some parallel verses from Spenser, of which I endeavored to preserve the sense

and spirit with the utmost exactness. Thus I pursued the arts in their career.

Without engaging in the vast labyrinth of philosophical absurdities, which have been so long honored wth the name of science, I only took notice of the most palpable errors which had been mistaken for the most incontestable truths; and confining myself entirely to the useful arts, I still kept in view the history of all the discoveries which have been made from Geber the Arabian, who invented algebra, to the very last miracles of our own time.

This part of the history was doubtless the favorite of my attention, and the revolutions of states were no more than accessory to those of the arts and sciences. This whole work, which had cost me so much trouble, having been stolen from me some years ago, I was the more chagrined, as I found myself absolutely incapable of beginning again such a tedious and toilsome task.

That part which was purely historical, remained in my hands an undigested mass; it is brought down to the reign of Philip II. and ought to be continued to the age of Louis XIV.

This series of history, disencumbered of all the details which commonly obscure the plan, as well as of all those minute circumstances of war, so interesting at the time, but so tedious afterward, together with the smaller occurrences which never fail to injure the great events, should compose a vast picture, which, by striking the imagination, might assist the memory.

Several persons expressed a desire of having the

manuscript, imperfect as it was; and indeed there are above thirty copies of it, which I gave the more willingly, because, finding myself unable to work longer on the subject, I considered them as so many materials put into the hands of those who might finish the performance.

When M. de la Bruyère had the privilege of the "French Mercury" about 1747, he begged of me some sheets which appeared in his journal, and were afterward collected in 1751; for they make collections of everything. What relates to the Crusades, which was but a part of the work, they inserted in this collection as a detached piece, and the whole was printed very incorrectly under the preposterous title of "A Plan of the History of the Human Understanding." This pretended plan of the history of the human understanding contains no more than some historical chapters relating to the ninth and tenth centuries.

A bookseller at The Hague having found a more complete manuscript, has printed it under the title of "An Abridgment of the Universal History, from the Time of Charles the Great, to the reign of Charles V.," although it goes not so far as Louis XI., king of France; probably he had no more copy, or was resolved to suspend the publication of his third volume, until the first two should be sold off.

He says he bought the manuscript of a man who lives at Brussels; and indeed I was informed that a domestic, belonging to his highness Prince Charles of Lorraine, had been long in possession of a copy which fell into his hands by a very remarkable

accident; for it was taken in a box among the equipage of a certain prince, which was pillaged by the hussars in a battle fought in Bohemia. This work being therefore got by the right of war, is a lawful prize: but one would imagine the same hussars had directed the printing; for it is strangely disfigured, and the most interesting chapters are totally wanting; almost all the dates are false, and the proper names for the most part disguised. There are many expressions which convey no idea, and a number that convey such as are either ridiculous or indecent. The transitions, the connections are misplaced. I am often made to say that which is quite contrary to what I have said; and I cannot conceive how anybody should read that work as it has been presented to the public. I am very glad that the bookseller has found his account in the sale of it; but, if he had consulted me on the subject, I would have enabled him to oblige the world with a work that would not have been so defective; and, seeing it was impossible to stop the impression, I would have taken all imaginable pains to arrange that unformed mass, which, in its present condition, does not deserve the notice of any sensible man.

As I did not believe that any bookseller would have run the risk of publishing such an imperfect work, I frankly own I have made use of some of the materials to build a more regular and solid edifice. One of the most respectable princesses of Germany, to whom I could refuse nothing, having done me the honor to desire I would write the "Annals of the Empire," I have not scrupled to insert a

small number of pages from that pretended "Universal History," in the work which she commanded me to compose.

While I was busied in giving her Serene Highness this proof of my obedience, and the "Annals of the Empire" were almost ready printed, I understood that a certain German, who was last year at Paris, had employed his talents on the same subject, and that his work was ready to appear. Had I known the circumstances sooner, I should certainly have put a stop to the impression of mine: for I know he is more equal to such an enterprise than I am, and I am very far from pretending to enter the lists with such a rival; but the bookseller to whom I have made a present of my manuscript, has taken too much pains in serving me, to be deprived of the fruits of his labor: besides, the taste and manner in which I have written these "Annals of the Empire," being altogether different from the method observed by that learned gentleman, whom I have had the honor to mention, perhaps the understanding reader may not be sorry to see the same truths displayed in different lights.

THALIA

# VOLTAIRE

SHORT STUDIES IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN SUBJECTS

VOL. XIX — PART II

Voltaire recorded his views upon the English people and government in a series of "Philosophic Letters," which were published in France and in England in 1733. According to Parton, Lafayette declared that it was his reading of these letters that made him a republican at nine years of age, and to them Rousseau "attributed in great measure the awakening of his late-maturing intelligence." The author had to tone the letters down to get them passed by the censor. His praise of English liberty of thought and speech even then proved too irritating to the authorities. The book was denounced as heretical, in May, 1734. Every known copy was confiscated. The publisher was sent to the Bastille; a *lettre de cachet* was issued against the author; his house was searched, and the Parliament of Paris had the book publicly burned by the executioner. A few later pieces have been included here.

# CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| The English Parliament | 5 |
| The English Constitution | 9 |
| English Commerce | 16 |
| Inoculation | 19 |
| Chancellor Bacon | 27 |
| Locke | 33 |
| Suicide | 39 |
| English Tragedy | 44 |
| English Comedy | 52 |
| Learned Courtiers | 75 |
| Rochester and Waller | 77 |
| Prior, Butler, and Swift | 82 |
| Pope | 93 |
| The Learned Societies | 96 |
| Cromwell | 103 |
| The Misfortunes of Charles I. | 111 |
| England under Charles II. | 114 |
| The English Theatre | 122 |
| Hamlet | 124 |
| The Orphan | 140 |
| Revolutions in the Tragic Art | 151 |

On Tragedy . . . . . 174
The Religion of the Quakers . . . 192
The Church of England . . . . 212
The Presbyterians . . . . . 216
The Anti-Trinitarians . . . . 219
The Peopling of America . . . . 222
The Conquest of Peru . . . . 234
The Negro . . . . . 240
The French in America . . . . 242
The French Islands . . . . . 251
The English and Dutch Possessions . 260
Paraguay . . . . . 269
The Changes in our Globe . . . 279

# LIST OF PLATES

## Part II


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Thalia . . . . . *Frontispiece* | |
| William Penn . . . . . | 210 |

# SHORT STUDIES ON ENGLISH TOPICS.

## WITH NOTES ON THE PEOPLING OF AMERICA.

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### THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT.

THE MEMBERS of the English Parliament are fond of comparing themselves, on all occasions, to the old Romans.

Not long since, Mr. Shippen opened a speech in the house of commons with these words: "The majesty of the people of England would be wounded." The singularity of this expression occasioned a loud laugh; but this gentleman, far from being disconcerted, repeated the statement with a resolute tone of voice, and the laugh ceased. I must own, I see no resemblance between the majesty of the people of England and that of the Romans, and still less between the two governments. There is in London a senate, some of the members whereof are accused —doubtless very unjustly—of selling their votes, on certain occasions, as was done at Rome; and herein lies the whole resemblance. In other respects, the two nations appear to be quite opposite in character, with regard both to good and to evil. The Romans never knew the terrible madness of religious wars. This abomination was reserved for devout preachers

of patience and humility. Marius and Sulla, Cæsar and Pompey, Antony and Augustus, did not draw their swords against one another to determine whether the flamen should wear his shirt over his robe, or his robe over his shirt; or whether the sacred chickens should both eat and drink, or eat only, in order to take the augury. The English have formerly destroyed one another, by sword or halter, for disputes of as trifling a nature. The Episcopalians and the Presbyterians quite turned the heads of these gloomy people for a time; but I believe they will hardly be so silly again, as they seem to have grown wiser at their own expense; and I do not perceive the least inclination in them to murder one another any more for mere syllogisms. But who can answer for the follies and prejudices of mankind?

Here follows a more essential difference between Rome and England, which throws the advantage entirely on the side of the latter; namely, that the civil wars of Rome ended in slavery, and those of the English in liberty. The English are the only people on earth who have been able to prescribe limits to the power of kings by resisting them, and who, by a series of struggles, have at length established that wise and happy form of government where the prince is all-powerful to do good, and at the same time is restrained from committing evil; where the nobles are great without insolence or lordly power, and the people share in the government without confusion.

The house of lords and the house of commons divide the legislative power under the king; but the Romans had no such balance. Their patricians and plebeians were continually at variance, without any intermediate power to reconcile them. The Roman senate, who were so unjustly, so criminally, formed as to exclude the plebeians from having any share in the affairs of government, could find no other artifice to effect their design than to employ them in foreign wars. They considered the people as wild beasts, whom they were to let loose upon their neighbors, for fear they should turn upon their masters. Thus the greatest defect in the government of the Romans was the means of making them conquerors; and, by being unhappy at home, they became masters of the world, till in the end their divisions sank them into slavery.

The government of England, from its nature, can never attain to so exalted a pitch, nor can it ever have so fatal an end. It has not in view the splendid folly of making conquests, but only the prevention of their neighbors from conquering. The English are jealous not only of their own liberty, but even of that of other nations. The only reason of their quarrels with Louis XIV. was on account of his ambition.

It has not been without some difficulty that liberty has been established in England, and the idol of arbitrary power has been drowned in seas of blood; nevertheless, the English do not think they have purchased their laws at too high a price. Other

nations have shed as much blood; but then the blood they spilled in defence of their liberty served only to enslave them the more.

That which rises to a revolution in England is no more than a sedition in other countries. A city in Spain, in Barbary, or in Turkey takes up arms in defence of its privileges, when immediately it is stormed by mercenary troops, it is punished by executioners, and the rest of the nation kiss their chains. The French think that the government of this island is more tempestuous than the seas which surround it; in which, indeed, they are not mistaken: but then this happens only when the king raises the storm by attempting to seize the ship, of which he is only the pilot. The civil wars of France lasted longer, were more cruel, and productive of greater evils, than those of England: but none of these civil wars had a wise and becoming liberty for their object.

In the detestable times of Charles IX. and Henry III. the whole affair was only, whether the people should be slaves to the Guises. As to the last war of Paris, it deserves only to be hooted at. It makes us think we see a crowd of schoolboys rising up in arms against their master, and afterward being whipped for it. Cardinal de Retz, who was witty and brave, but employed those talents badly; who was rebellious without cause, factious without design, and the head of a defenceless party, caballed for the sake of caballing, and seemed to foment the civil war for his own amusement and pastime. The parliament did not know what he aimed at, nor what

he did not aim at. He levied troops, and the next instant cashiered them; he threatened; he begged pardon; he set a price on Cardinal Mazarin's head, and afterward congratulated him in a public manner. Our civil wars under Charles VI. were bloody and cruel, those of the League execrable, and that of the Frondeurs ridiculous.

That for which the French chiefly reproach the English nation is the murder of King Charles I., a prince who merited a better fate, and whom his subjects treated just as he would have treated them, had he been powerful and at ease. After all, consider, on one side, Charles I. defeated in a pitched battle, imprisoned, tried, sentenced to die in Westminster Hall, and then beheaded; and, on the other, the emperor Henry VII. poisoned by his chaplain in receiving the sacrament; Henry III. of France stabbed by a monk; thirty different plots contrived to assassinate Henry IV., several of them put into execution, and the last depriving that great monarch of his life. Weigh, I say, all these wicked attempts, and then judge.

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## THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION.

This mixture of different departments in the government of England; this harmony between the king, lords, and commons has not always subsisted. England was for a long time in a state of slavery, having, at different periods, worn the yoke of the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and, last of all, the Normans. William the Conqueror, in particular, gov-

erned them with a rod of iron. He disposed of the goods and lives of his new subjects like an eastern tyrant: he forbade, under pain of death, any Englishman to have either fire or light in his house after eight o'clock at night, whether it was that he intended by this edict to prevent their holding any assemblies in the night, or, by so whimsical a prohibition, had a mind to try to what a degree of abjectness men might be subjected by their fellow-creatures. It is, however, certain that the English had parliaments both before and since the time of William the Conqueror; they still boast of them, as if the assemblies which then bore the title of parliaments, and which were composed of the ecclesiastical tyrants and the barons, had been actually the guardians of their liberties, and the preservers of the public felicity.

These barbarians, who poured like a torrent from the shores of the Baltic and overran all the east of Europe, brought the use of these estates or parliaments, which are the subject of so much noise, though very little known, along with them. It is true, kings were not then despotic, which is precisely the reason why the people groaned under so intolerable a yoke. The chiefs of those barbarians who had ravaged France, Italy, Spain, and England, made themselves monarchs. Their captains divided and shared with them the lands of the conquered: hence those margraves, lairds, barons, with all that gang of petty tyrants who have often disputed with sovereigns who were not firmly fixed on their thrones the spoils and plunder of the people. It was

so many birds of prey fighting with an eagle, that they might suck the blood of the doves; and every nation, instead of having one good and indulgent master, which might have been their lot, had a hundred of those blood-sucking monsters. Shortly after, priestcraft began to mingle in civil matters; from earliest antiquity, the fate of the Gauls, Germans, and inhabitants of Great Britain depended on the Druids, and on the heads of their villages, an ancient kind of barons, though a less tyrannical sort than their predecessors. These Druids called themselves mediators between men and the Deity: it was they who made laws, excommunicated, and, lastly, punished criminals with death. The bishops succeeded by imperceptible degrees to their temporal authority in the Gothic and Vandal government. The popes put themselves at their head, and with their briefs, bulls, and their other more mischievous instruments, the monks, made kings tremble on their thrones, deposed or assassinated them at pleasure, and, in a word, drew to themselves all the treasure of Europe. The weak Ina, one of the tyrants of the Saxon heptarchy, was the first who, in a pilgrimage which he made to Rome, submitted to pay "Peter's pence"—about a French crown, or half a crown sterling—for every house in his kingdom. The whole island presently followed this example; England became insensibly a province to the pope; and the holy father sent thither, from time to time, his legates to levy extraordinary impositions. At last John, surnamed Sans Terre, or Lackland, made a formal cession of his kingdom to his holiness, who

had excommunicated him. The barons, who were by no means gainers by this proceeding, expelled this wretched prince, and set up in his place Louis VIII., father of St. Louis, king of France; but they were presently disgusted with this new monarch, and compelled him to cross the seas again.

While the barons, with the bishops and popes, were tearing all England to pieces, where each of them would fain have ruled, the people, that is to say, the most numerous, the most useful, and even the most virtuous part of mankind, composed of those who addict themselves to the study of the laws and of the sciences, of merchants, mechanics, and, in a word, of laborers, that first and most despised of all professions; the people, I say, were considered by them as animals of a nature inferior to the rest of the human species. The commons were then far from enjoying the least share in the government; they were then villeins or slaves, whose labor, and even whose blood, was the property of their masters, who called themselves the nobility. Far the greatest part of the human species were in Europe—as they still are in several parts of the world—the slaves of some lord, and at best but a kind of cattle, which they bought and sold with their lands. It was the work of ages to render justice to humanity, and to find out what a horrible thing it was, that the many should sow while a few did reap: and is it not the greatest happiness for the French, that the authority of those petty tyrants has been extinguished by the lawful authority of our sov-

ereign, and in England by that of the king and nation conjointly?

Happily, in those shocks which the quarrels of kings and great men gave to empires, the chains of nations have been relaxed more or less. Liberty in England has arisen from the quarrels of tyrants. The barons forced John Sans Terre and Henry III. to grant that famous charter, the principal scope of which was in fact to make kings dependent on the lords; but, at the same time, the rest of the nation were favored, that they might side with their pretended protectors. This great charter, which is looked upon as the palladium and the consecrated fountain of the public liberty, is itself a proof how little that liberty was understood: the very title shows beyond all doubt that the king thought himself absolute, *de jure*; and that the barons, and even the clergy, forced him to relinquish this pretended right, only because they were stronger than he. It begins in this manner: "We, of our free will, grant the following privileges to the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, and barons of our kingdom," etc. In the articles of this charter there is not one word said of the house of commons; a proof that no such house then existed; or, if it did, that its power was next to nothing. In this the free men of England are specified—a melancholy proof that there were then some who were not so. We see, by the thirty-second article, that those pretended free men owed their lords certain servitude. Such a liberty as this smelled very rank of slavery. By the twenty-first

article, the king ordains, that from henceforth officers shall be restrained from forcibly seizing the horses and carriages of free men, except on paying for the same. This regulation was considered by the people as real liberty, because it destroyed a most intolerable kind of tyranny. Henry VII., that fortunate conqueror and politician, who pretended to cherish the barons, whom he both feared and hated, bethought himself of the project of alienating their lands. By this means the villeins, who afterward acquired property by their industry, bought the castles of the great lords, who had ruined themselves by their extravagance; and by degrees nearly all the estates in the kingdom changed masters.

The house of commons daily became more powerful; the families of the ancient peerage became extinct in time; and as, in the rigor of the law, there is no other nobility in England besides the peers, the whole order would have been annihilated had not the kings created new barons from time to time; and this expedient preserved the body of the peers they had formerly so much dreaded, in order to oppose the house of commons, now grown too powerful. All the new peers, who form the upper house, receive nothing besides their titles from the crown; scarcely any of them possessing the lands from which those titles are derived. The duke of Dorset, for example, is one of them, though he possesses not a foot of land in Dorsetshire; another may be earl of a village, who hardly knows in what quarter of the island such a village lies. They have only a certain power in parliament, and nowhere out

of it, which, with some few privileges, is all they enjoy.

Here is no such thing as the distinction of high, middle, and low justice in France; nor of the right of hunting on the lands of a citizen, who has not the liberty of firing a single shot of a musket on his own estate.

A peer or nobleman in this country pays his share of the taxes as others do, all of which are regulated by the house of commons; which house, if it is second only in rank, is first in point of credit. The lords and bishops, it is true, may reject any bill of the commons, when it regards the raising of money; but are not entitled to make the smallest amendment in it: they must either pass it or throw it out, without any restriction whatever. When the bill is confirmed by the lords, and approved by the king, then every person is to pay his quota without distinction; and that not according to his rank or quality, which would be absurd, but in proportion to his revenue. Here is no *taille*, or arbitrary poll-tax, but a real tax on lands; all of which underwent an actual valuation under the famous William III. The taxes remain always the same, notwithstanding the fact that the value of lands has risen; so that no one is stripped to the bone, nor can there be any ground of complaint; the feet of the peasant are not tortured with wooden shoes; he eats the best wheaten bread, is well and warmly clothed, and is in no apprehension on account of the increase of his herds and flocks, or terrified into a thatched house, instead of a convenient slated roof, for fear of an augmentation

of the *taille* the year following. There are even a number of peasants, or, if you will, farmers, who have from five to six hundred pounds sterling yearly income, and who are not above cultivating those fields which have enriched them, and where they enjoy the greatest of all human blessings, liberty.

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## ENGLISH COMMERCE.

Never has any people, since the fall of Carthage, been at the same time powerful by sea and land, till Venice set the example. The Portuguese, from their good fortune in discovering the passage by way of the Cape of Good Hope, have been for some time great lords on the coasts of the East Indies, but have never been very respectable in Europe. Even the United Provinces became warlike, contrary to their natural disposition, and in spite of themselves; and it can in no way be ascribed to their union among themselves, but to their being united with England, that they have contributed to hold the balance in Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Carthage, Venice, and Amsterdam were undoubtedly powerful; but their conduct has been exactly like that of merchants grown rich by traffic, who afterward purchase lands with the dignity of lordship annexed to them. Neither Carthage, Venice, nor Holland have, from a warlike and even conquering beginning, ended in a commercial nation. The English are the only people existing who have done this; they were a long time warriors before they learned to cast accounts. They were entirely

ignorant of numbers when they won the battles of Agincourt, Crécy, and Poitiers, and were also ignorant that it was in their power to become corn-factors and woollen-drapers, two things that would certainly turn to much better account. This science alone has rendered the nation at once populous, wealthy, and powerful. London was a poor country-town when Edward III. conquered one-half of France; and it is wholly owing to this that the English have become merchants; that London exceeds Paris in extent, and number of inhabitants; that they are able to equip and man two hundred sail of ships of war, and keep the kings who are their allies in pay. The Scottish are born warriors, and, from the purity of their air, inherit good sense. Whence comes it then that Scotland, under the name of a union, has become a province of England? It is because Scotland has scarcely any other commodity than coal, and that England has fine tin, excellent wool, and abounds in corn, manufactures, and trading companies.

When Louis XIV. made Italy tremble, and his armies, already in possession of Savoy and Piedmont, were on the point of reducing Turin, Prince Eugene was obliged to march from the remotest parts of Germany to the assistance of the duke of Savoy. He was in want of money, without which cities can neither be taken nor defended. He had recourse to the English merchants. In half an hour's time they lent him five millions, with which he effected the deliverance of Turin, beat the French, and wrote this short note to those who had

lent him the money: "Gentlemen, I have received your money, and flatter myself I have employed it to your satisfaction." This gives an Englishman a kind of pride, which is extremely well founded, and causes him, not without reason, to compare himself to a citizen of Rome. Thus the younger son of a peer of the realm is not above traffic. Lord Townshend, secretary of state, has a brother who is satisfied with being a merchant in the city. At the time when Lord Oxford ruled all England, his younger brother was a factor at Aleppo, whence he could never be prevailed on to return, and where he died. This custom, which is now unhappily dying out, appears monstrous to a German, whose head is full of the coats of arms and pageants of his family. They can never conceive how it is possible that the son of an English peer should be no more than a rich and powerful citizen, while in Germany they are all princes. I have known more than thirty highnesses of the same name, whose whole fortunes and estate put together amounted to a few coats of arms, and the starving pride they inherited from their ancestors.

In France everybody is a marquis; and a man just come from the obscurity of some remote province, with money in his pocket, and a name that ends with an *"ac"* or an *"ille,"* may give himself airs, and usurp such phrases as, "A man of my quality and rank"; and hold merchants in the most sovereign contempt. The merchant again, by dint of hearing his profession despised on all occasions, at last is fool enough to blush at his condition. I will

not, however, take upon me to say which is the most useful to his country, and which of the two ought to have the preference; whether the powdered lord, who knows to a minute when the king rises or goes to bed, perhaps to stool, and who gives himself airs of importance in playing the part of a slave in the antechamber of some minister; or the merchant, who enriches his country, and from his counting-house sends his orders into Surat or Cairo, thereby contributing to the happiness and convenience of human nature.

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## INOCULATION.

THE REST of Europe, that is, the Christian part of it, very gravely assert that the English are fools and madmen; fools, in communicating the contagion of smallpox to their children, in order to hinder them from being subject to that dangerous and loathsome disorder; madmen, in wantonly exposing their children to this pestilence, with the design of preventing a contingent evil. The English, on their side, call the rest of Europe unnatural and cowardly; unnatural, in leaving their children exposed to almost certain death by smallpox; and cowardly, in fearing to give their children a trifling matter of pain for a purpose so noble and so evidently useful. In order to determine which of the two is in the right, I shall now relate the history of this famous practice, which is in France the subject of so much dread.

The women of Circassia have from time imme-

morial been accustomed to give their children smallpox, even as early as at six months of age, by making an incision in the arm, and afterward inserting in this incision a pustule carefully taken from the body of some other child. This pustule so insinuated produces in the body of the patient the same effect that leaven does in a piece of dough; that is, it ferments in it, and communicates to the mass of blood the qualities with which it is impregnated. The pustules of the child infected in this manner serve to convey the same disease to others. This disorder, therefore, is perpetually circulating through the different parts of Circassia; and when, unluckily, there is no infection of smallpox in the country, it creates the same uneasiness as a dearth or an unhealthy season would have occasioned.

What has given rise to this custom in Circassia, and which is so extraordinary to other nations, is, however, a cause common to all the nations on the face of the earth; that is, the tenderness of mothers, and motives of interest. The Circassians are poor, but have handsome daughters; which, accordingly, are the principal article of their foreign commerce. It is they who furnish beauties for the seraglios of the grand seignior, the sufi of Persia, and others who are rich enough to purchase and to maintain these precious commodities. These people bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that is, in virtuous and honorable principles, which contain the whole science of wheedling the male part of the creation; the art of dancing, with gestures expressive of uncommon effeminacy and lascivious-

ness; and lastly, that of rekindling, by the most bewitching artifices, the exhausted appetites of those haughty lords to whom their fates have destined them. These poor creatures repeat their lesson every day with their mothers, in the same manner as our girls do their catechism; that is, without understanding a single syllable of what is taught them. Now it often happened that a father and mother, after having taken an infinite deal of pains in giving their children a good education, suddenly see their hopes frustrated. Smallpox getting into the family, one daughter perhaps died; another lost an eye; a third recovered, but with a disfigured nose; so that here was an honest couple hopelessly ruined. Often, too, an entire stagnation of all kinds of commerce has ensued, and that for several years running, when the disorder happened to be epidemic, to the no small detriment of the seraglios of Turkey and Persia.

A commercial people are always exceedingly vigilant with regard to their interest, and never neglect those items of knowledge that may be of use in the carrying on of their traffic. The Circassians found that, upon computation, in a thousand persons there was hardly one that was ever twice seized with smallpox completely formed; that there had been instances of a person's having had a slight touch of it, or something resembling it, but there never were any two relapses known to be dangerous; in short, that the same person has never been known to have been twice infected with this disorder. They further remark, that when the disease is mild, and the

eruption has only to pierce through a thin and delicate skin, it leaves no mark on the face. From these natural observations they concluded, that if a child of six months or a year old was to have a mild kind of smallpox, not only would the child certainly survive, but it would get better without bearing any marks of it, and would assuredly be immune during the remainder of its life. Hence it followed, that their only method would be to communicate the disorder to their children betimes, which they did, by insinuating into the child's body a pustule taken from the body of one infected with smallpox, the most completely formed, and at the same time the most favorable kind that could be found. The experiment could hardly fail. The Turks, a very sensible people, soon adopted this practice; and, at this day, there is scarcely a pasha in Constantinople who does not inoculate his children while they are at the breast.

There are some who pretend that the Circassians formerly learned this custom from the Arabians. We will leave this point in history to be elucidated by some learned Benedictine, who will not fail to compose several volumes in folio upon the subject, together with the necessary vouchers. All I have to say of the matter is that, in the beginning of the reign of George I., Lady Mary Wortley Montague, one of the most celebrated ladies in England for her strong and solid good sense, happening to be with her husband at Constantinople, resolved to give smallpox to a child she had had in that country. In vain did her chaplain remonstrate that this practice

was by no means consistent with Christian principles, and could only be expected to succeed with infidels; my lady Wortley's son recovered, and was presently as well as could be wished. This lady, on her return to London, communicated the experiment she had made to the princess of Wales,[1] now queen of Great Britain. It must be acknowledged that, setting crowns and titles aside, this princess is certainly born for the encouragement of arts, and for the good of the human race, to whom she is a generous benefactor. She is an amiable philosopher seated on a throne, who has improved every opportunity of instruction, and who has never let slip any occasion of showing her innate generosity. It is she who, on hearing that a daughter of Milton was still living, and in extreme misery, immediately sent her a valuable present; she it is who encourages the celebrated father Courayer; in a word, it is she who deigned to become the mediatrix between Dr. Clarke and Mr. Leibnitz. As soon as she heard of inoculation for smallpox, she caused it to be tried on four criminals under sentence of death, who were thus doubly indebted to her for their lives: for she not only rescued them from the gallows, but, by means of this artificial attack of smallpox, prevented them from having it in the natural way, which they, in all human probability, would have had, and of which they might have died at a more advanced age. The princess, thus assured of the utility of this proof, caused her own children to be inoculated. All England, or rather Britain, followed her example; so

[1]Queen Caroline.

that from that time at least six thousand children stand indebted for their lives to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, as do all the fair of the island for preserving their beauty.

In a hundred persons that come into the world, at least sixty are found to contract smallpox; of these sixty, twenty are known to die, in the most favorable times, and twenty more wear very disagreeable marks of this cruel disorder as long as they live. Here is then a fifth part of the human species assuredly killed, or, at least, horribly disfigured. Among the vast numbers inoculated in Great Britain, or in Turkey, none are ever known to die, except such as were in a very ill state of health, or given over before. No one is marked with it; no one is ever infected a second time, supposing the inoculation to be perfect, that is, to have taken place as it ought. It is, therefore, certain that, had some French lady imported this secret from Constantinople into Paris, she would have rendered an inestimable and everlasting piece of service to the nation. The duke de Villequier, father of the present duke d'Aumont, a nobleman of the most robust constitution, would not have been cut off in the flower of his age; the prince de Soubise, who enjoyed the most remarkable state of good health ever known, would not have been carried off at twenty-five; nor would the grandfather of Louis XV. have been laid in his grave by it in his fiftieth year. The twenty thousand persons who died at Paris in 1723 would have been now alive. What shall we say then? Is it that the French set a lower value upon life? or are the

ladies of France less anxious about the preservation of their charms? It is true, and it must be acknowledged, that we are a very odd kind of people! It is possible, that in ten years we may think of adopting this British custom, provided the doctors and curates allow us this indulgence; or, perhaps, the French will inoculate their children, out of mere whim, should those islanders leave it off, from their natural inconstancy.

I learn that the Chinese have practised this custom for two hundred years; the example of a nation that has the first character in point of natural good sense, as well as of their excellent internal police, is a strong prejudice in its favor. It is true, the Chinese follow a method peculiar to themselves; they make no incision, but take smallpox up the nose in powder, just as we do a pinch of snuff: this method is more pleasant, but amounts to much the same thing, and serves equally to prove that had inoculation been practised in France, it must assuredly have saved the lives of thousands.

It is some years since a Jesuit missionary having read this chapter, and being in a province of America, where smallpox makes horrible ravages, bethought himself of causing all the Indian children he baptized to be inoculated, so that they are indebted to him not only for this present life, but also for life eternal at the same time; what inestimable gifts for savages!

The bishop of Worcester has lately preached up the doctrine of inoculation at London; he has proved, like a good citizen and patriot, what a vast

number of subjects this practice preserves to a nation; a doctrine which he has also enforced by such arguments as might be expected from a pastor and a Christian. They would preach at Paris against this salutary invention, as they wrote twenty years ago against Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy: in short, everything contributes to prove that the English are greater philosophers, and possessed of more courage than we. It will require some time before a true spirit of reason and a particular boldness of sentiment will be able to make their way over the Straits of Dover.

It must not, however, be imagined that no persons are to be met with from the Orkneys to the South Foreland but philosophers; the other species will always form the greater number. Inoculation was at first opposed in London; and a great while before the bishop of Worcester preached this gospel from the pulpit, a certain curate had taken it into his head to declaim against this practice: he told his congregation that Job had certainly been inoculated by the devil. This man spoiled a good Capuchin, for which nature seems to have intended him; he was certainly unworthy the honor of being born in this island. So we see prejudice, as usual, first got possession of the pulpit, and reason could not reach it till long after; this is no more than the common progress of the human mind.

## CHANCELLOR BACON.

It is not long since the ridiculous and threadbare question was agitated in a celebrated assembly; who was the greatest man, Cæsar or Alexander, Tamerlane or Cromwell? Somebody said that it must undoubtedly be Sir Isaac Newton. This man was certainly in the right; for if true greatness consists in having received from heaven the advantage of a superior genius, with the talent of applying it for the interest of the possessor and of mankind, a man like Newton—and such a one is hardly to be met with in ten centuries—is surely by much the greatest; and those statesmen and conquerors which no age has ever been without, are commonly but so many illustrious villains. It is the man who sways our minds by the prevalence of reason and the native force of truth, not they who reduce mankind to a state of slavery by brutish force and downright violence; the man who by the vigor of his mind, is able to penetrate into the hidden secrets of nature, and whose capacious soul can contain the vast frame of the universe, not those who lay nature waste, and desolate the face of the earth, that claims our reverence and admiration.

Therefore, as you are desirous to be informed of the great men that England has produced, I shall begin with the Bacons, the Lockes, and the Newtons. The generals and ministers will come after them in their turn.

I must begin with the celebrated baron Verulam, known to the rest of Europe by the name of Bacon,

who was the son of a certain keeper of the seals, and was for a considerable time chancellor under James I. Notwithstanding the intrigues and bustle of a court, and the occupations incident to his office, which would have required his whole attention, he found means to become a great philosopher, a good historian, and an elegant writer; and what is yet more wonderful is that he lived in an age where the art of writing was totally unknown, and where sound philosophy was still less so. This personage, as is the way among mankind, was more valued after his death than while he lived. His enemies were courtiers residing at London, while his admirers consisted wholly of foreigners. When Marquis d'Effiat brought Princess Mary, daughter of Henry the Great, over to be married to King Charles, this minister paid Bacon a visit, who being then confined to a sick bed, received him with close curtains. "You are like the angels," said d'Effiat to him; "we hear much talk of them, and while everybody thinks them superior to men, we are never favored with a sight of them."

You have been told in what manner Bacon was accused of a crime which is very far from being the sin of a philosopher;[1] of being corrupted by pe-

[1] Lord Verulam being committed to the Tower, and conscious of that corruption which was laid to his charge, presented a petition to the house of peers, confessing himself guilty, and requesting that he might not be exposed to the shame of a public trial. He was deprived of his office of chancellor; rendered incapable of sitting in the upper house of parliament; fined forty thousand pounds, and condemned to be imprisoned in the Tower during the king's pleasure. James, in consideration of his great genius, remitted his fine, released him from prison, and indulged him with a very considerable pension.

cuniary gifts; and how he was sentenced by the house of peers to pay a fine of about four hundred thousand livres of our money, besides losing his office of chancellor, and being degraded from the rank and dignity of a peer. At present the English revere his memory to such a degree that only with great difficulty can one imagine him to have been in the least guilty. Should you ask me what I think of it, I will make use of a saying I heard from Lord Bolingbroke. They happened to be talking of the avarice with which the duke of Marlborough had been taxed, and quoted several instances of it, for the truth of which they appealed to Lord Bolingbroke, who, as being of a contrary party, might, perhaps, without any trespass against the laws of decorum, freely say what he thought. "He was," said he, "so great a man that I do not recollect whether he had any faults or not." I shall, therefore, confine myself to those qualities which have acquired Chancellor Bacon the esteem of all Europe.

The most singular, as well as the most excellent, of all his works, is that which is now the least read, and which is at the same time the most useful; I mean his *"Novum Scientiarum Organum."* This is the scaffold by means of which the edifice of the new philosophy has been reared; so that when the building was completed, the scaffold was no longer of any use. Chancellor Bacon was still unacquainted with nature, but he perfectly knew, and pointed out extraordinarily well, all the paths which lead to her recesses. He had very early despised what those square-capped fools teach in those dun-

geons called *Colleges,* under the name of philosophy, and did everything in his power that those bodies, instituted for the cultivation and perfection of the human understanding, might cease any longer to mar it, by their "quiddities," their "horrors of a vacuum," their "substantial forms," with the rest of that jargon which ignorance and a nonsensical jumble of religion had consecrated.

This great man is the father of experimental philosophy. It is true, wonderful discoveries had been made even before his time; the mariner's compass, the art of printing, that of engraving, the art of painting in oil, that of making glass, with the remarkably advantageous invention of restoring in some measure sight to the blind; that is, to old men, by means of spectacles; the secret of making gunpowder had, also, been discovered. They had gone in search of, discovered, and conquered a new world in another hemisphere. Who would not have thought that these sublime discoveries had been made by the greatest philosophers, and in times much more enlightened than ours? By no means; for all these astonishing revolutions happened in the ages of scholastic barbarity. Chance alone has brought forth almost all these inventions; it is even pretended that chance has had a great share in the discovery of America; at least, it has been believed that Christopher Columbus undertook this voyage on the faith of a captain of a ship who had been cast by a storm on one of the Caribbee islands. Be this as it will, men had learned to penetrate to the utmost limits of the hab-

itable globe, and to destroy the most impregnable cities with an artificial thunder, much more terrible than the real; but they were still ignorant of the circulation of the blood, the weight and pressure of the air, the laws of motion, the doctrine of light and color, the number of the planets in our system, etc. And a man that was capable to maintain a thesis on the "Categories of Aristotle," the *universale a parte rei*, or such-like nonsense, was considered as a prodigy.

The most wonderful and useful inventions are by no means those which do most honor to the human mind. And it is to a certain mechanical instinct, which exists in almost every man, that we owe far the greater part of the arts, and in no manner whatever to philosophy. The discovery of fire, the arts of making bread, of melting and working metals, of building houses, the invention of the shuttle, are infinitely more useful than printing and the compass; notwithstanding, all these were invented by men who were still in a state of barbarity. What astonishing things have the Greeks and Romans since done in mechanics? Yet men believed, in their time, that the heavens were of crystal, and the stars were so many small lamps, that sometimes fell into the sea; and one of their greatest philosophers, after many researches, had at length discovered that the stars were so many pebbles, that had flown off like sparks from the earth.

In a word, there was not a man who had any idea of experimental philosophy before Chancellor Bacon; and of an infinity of experiments which have

been made since his time, there is hardly a single one which has not been pointed out in his book. He had even made a good number of them himself. He constructed several pneumatic machines, by which he discovered the elasticity of the air; he had long brooded over the discovery of its weight, and was even at times very near to catching it, when it was laid hold of by Torricelli. A short time after, experimental physics began to be cultivated in almost all parts of Europe. This was a hidden treasure, of which Bacon had some glimmerings, and which all the philosophers whom his promises had encouraged made their utmost efforts to lay open. We see in his book mention made in express terms of that new attraction of which Newton passes for the inventor. "We must inquire," said Bacon, "whether there be not a certain magnetic force, which operates reciprocally between the earth and other heavy bodies, between the moon and the ocean, between the planets, etc." In another place he says: "Either heavy bodies are impelled toward the centre of the earth, or they are mutually attracted by it; in this latter case it is evident that the nearer falling bodies approach the earth, the more forcibly are they attracted by it. We must try," continues he, "whether the same pendulum clock goes faster on the top of a mountain, or at the bottom of a mine. If the force of the weight diminishes on the mountain, and increases in the mine, it is probable the earth has a real attracting quality."

This precursor in philosophy was also an elegant writer, a historian, and a wit. His moral essays are in high estimation, though they seem rather calculated

to instruct than to please; and as they are neither a satire on human nature, like the maxims of Rochefoucauld, nor a school of skepticism, like Montaigne; they are not so much read as these two ingenious books. His life of Henry VII. passed for a masterpiece; but how is it possible some people should have been idle enough to compare so small a work with the history of our illustrious M. de Thou? Speaking of that famous impostor Perkin, son of a Jew convert, who assumed so boldly the name of Richard IV., king of England, being encouraged by the duchess of Burgundy, and who disputed the crown with Henry VII., he expresses himself in these terms: "About this time King Henry was beset with evil spirits, by the witchcraft of the duchess of Burgundy, who conjured up from hell the ghost of Edward IV., in order to torment King Henry. When the duchess of Burgundy had instructed Perkin, she began to consider with herself in what region of the heavens she should make this comet shine, and resolved immediately that it should make its appearance in the horizon of Ireland." I think our sage de Thou seldom gives in to this gallimaufry, which used formerly to pass for the sublime, but which at present is known by its proper title, "bombast."

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## LOCKE.

THERE surely never was a more solid and more methodical understanding, nor a more acute and accurate logician, than Locke, though he was far from

being an excellent mathematician. He never could bring himself to undergo the drudgery of calculation, nor the dryness of mathematical truths, which offer no sensible image to the understanding: and no one has more fully evinced than he has, that a man, without the smallest assistance from geometry, might still possess the most geometrical intellect possible. The great philosophers before his time had made no difficulties in determining the essence or substance of the human soul; but as they were wholly ignorant of the matter, it was but reasonable they should all be of different opinions.

In Greece, which was at one time the cradle of arts and of errors, where the greatness and folly of the human mind were pushed to so great a height, they reasoned on the soul exactly as we do. The divine Anaxagoras, who had altars erected to him for teaching men that the sun was bigger than the Peloponnessus, that snow was black, that the sky was of stone, affirmed that the soul was an aerial spirit, though immortal. Diogenes, a different person from him, who became a cynic from a counterfeiter of money, asserted that the soul was a portion of the substance of God; a notion which had at least something striking. Epicurus maintains the soul is composed of parts, in the same manner as matter. Aristotle, whose works have been interpreted a thousand different ways, because they were in fact absolutely unintelligible, was of opinion, if we may trust some of his disciples, that the understandings of all mankind were but one and the same substance. The divine Plato, master of the divine Aristotle, and the

divine Socrates, master of the divine Plato, said that the soul was at the same time corporeal and eternal. The dæmon of Socrates had, no doubt, let him into the secret of this matter. There are actually some who pretend that a fellow who boasted of having a familiar was most assuredly either knave or fool; possibly they who say so may be rather too squeamish.

As for our fathers of the Church, several of them, in the first ages were of opinion that the human soul, as well as the angels, and God himself, were all corporeal. The world is every day improving. St. Bernard, as Father Mabillon is forced to own, taught, with respect to the soul, that after death it did not behold God in heaven, but was obliged to rest satisfied with conversing with the humanity of Jesus Christ. Possibly they took it for once on his bare word; though the adventure of the crusade has somewhat lessened the credit of his oracles. Whole drones of schoolmen came after him: there was the irrefragable doctor,[1] the subtile doctor,[2] the angelic doctor,[3] the seraphic doctor,[4] the cherubimical doctor, all of whom made no scruple of saying they were perfectly clear as to the soul's substance, but who have, for all that, spoken of it exactly as if they neither understood one syllable of what they spoke of, and desired that nobody else should. Our Descartes, born to discover the mistakes of antiquity, only that he might substitute his own in their place, and borne down by the stream of system, which hoodwinks the greatest men, imagined he had dem-

[1] Hales. [2] Duns Scotus. [3] St. Thomas. [4] Bonaventure.

onstrated that the soul was the same thing with thought, in the same manner as matter is the same with extension. He firmly maintained that the soul always thinks, and that, at its arrival in the body, it is provided with a whole magazine of metaphysical notions, as of God, space, infinity, and fully supplied with all sorts of abstract ideas, which it unhappily loses the moment it comes forth from its mother's womb. Father Malebranche, of the oratory, in his sublime illusions, admits of no such thing as innate ideas, though he had no doubt of our seeing everything in God; and that God Himself, if it is lawful to speak in this manner, was the very essence of our soul.

After so many speculative gentlemen had formed this romance of the soul, one truly wise man appeared, who has, in the most modest manner imaginable, given us its real history. Mr. Locke has laid open to man the anatomy of his own soul, just as some learned anatomist would have done that of the body. He avails himself throughout of the help of metaphysical lights; and although he is sometimes bold enough to speak in a positive manner, he is on other occasions not afraid to discover doubts. Instead of determining at once what we were entirely ignorant about, he examines, step by step, the objects of human knowledge; he takes a child from the moment of its birth; he accompanies him through all the stages of the human understanding; he views what he possesses in common with the brutes, and in what he is superior to them. Above all, he is solicitous to examine the internal evidence of conscious-

ness. "I leave," says he, "those who are possessed of more knowledge than I am to determine whether our souls exist before or after the organization of the body; but cannot help acknowledging that the soul that has fallen to my share is one of those coarse material kinds of souls which cannot always think; and I am even so unhappy as not to be able to conceive how it should be more indispensably necessary that the soul should always think, than it should be that the body should always be in motion."

For my own part, I am proud of the honor of being every whit as stupid on this point as Mr. Locke. Nobody shall ever persuade me that I always think; and I don't find myself in the least more disposed than he to think that, a few weeks after I was conceived, my soul was very learned, and acquainted with a thousand things that I forgot the moment I came into the world, and that I possessed to very little good purpose in the uterus, so many valuable secrets in philosophy, all of which abandoned me the instant they could have been of any advantage, and which I have never since been able to recover.

Locke, after demolishing the notion of innate ideas; after having renounced the vain opinion that the mind always thinks; having fully established this point, that the origin of all our ideas is from the senses;[1] having examined our simple and compound ideas; having accompanied the mind in all its operations; having shown the imperfection of all the languages spoken by men, and what a gross

[1] This is expressly the doctrine of Aristotle. The soul has no knowledge but that which it acquires through the canal of the senses.

abuse of terms we are every moment guilty of; Locke, I say, at length proceeds to consider the extent, or rather the nothingness, of human knowledge. This is the chapter in which he has the boldness to advance, though in a modest manner, that "we shall never be able to determine, whether a being, purely material, is capable of thought or not." This sagacious proposition has passed with more than one divine as a scandalous assertion, that the soul is material and mortal. Some English devotees as usual gave the alarm. The superstitious are in society what poltroons are in an army; they infect the rest with their own panics. They cried out that Mr. Locke wanted to turn all religion topsy-turvy: there was, however, not the smallest relation to religion in the affair, the question was purely philosophical, and altogether independent of faith and revelation. They had only to examine, without rancor, whether it were a contradiction to say, that "matter is incapable of thought," and, "God is able to endow matter with thought." But it is too frequent with theologians to begin with pronouncing that God is offended, whenever we are not of their side of the question, or happen not to think as they do: the case is pretty much like that of the bad poets, who took it into their heads to imagine Boileau spoke high treason, when he was only laughing at the silliness of their wretched compositions. Doctor Stillingfleet has acquired the character of a moderate divine, only because he has refrained from abuse in his controversy with Mr. Locke. He ventured to enter the lists with him, but was vanquished, because

he reasoned too much like a doctor; while Locke, like a true philosopher, fully acquainted with the strength and weakness of human understanding, fought with arms of whose temper he was perfectly well assured.

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## SUICIDE.

Philip Mordaunt, cousin-german to the famous earl of Peterborough, who was so well known in all the courts of Europe, and who made his boast that he had seen more postilions, and more crowned heads, than any other man in the world; this Philip Mordaunt, I say, was a young man about twenty-seven, handsome, well made, rich, of an illustrious family, and one who might pretend to anything; and, what was more than all the rest, he was passionately beloved by his mistress. However, this man took a distaste to life, discharged all that he owed, wrote to his friends to take leave of them, and even composed some verses upon the occasion, which concluded thus, that "though opium might be some relief to a wise man, if disgusted with the world, yet in his opinion a pistol, and a little resolution, were much more effectual remedies." His behavior was suitable to his principles; and he despatched himself with a pistol, without giving any other reason for it than that his soul was weary of his body, and that when we dislike our house we ought to quit it. One would imagine he chose to die because he was weary of being happy.

One Richard Smith has lately exhibited a most

extraordinary instance of this nature to the world. This Smith was tired of being really unhappy; he had been rich, and was reduced to poverty; he had been healthy, and had become infirm; he had a wife, to whom he had nothing to give but a share in his misfortunes; and an infant in the cradle was the only thing he had left. Richard Smith and his wife, Bridget, then, after having affectionately embraced, and given each a formal kiss to their child, first cut the poor little creature's throat, and then hanged themselves at the foot of their bed. I do not remember to have heard anywhere of such a scene of horrors committed in cold blood; but the letter which these unhappy wretches wrote to their cousin, Mr. Brindley, before their death, is as remarkable as the manner of their death. "We are certain," said they, "of meeting with forgiveness from God. . . . . We put an end to our lives because we were miserable, without any prospect of relief; and we have done our child that service to put it out of life, for fear it should have been as miserable as ourselves. . . It is to be observed that these people, after having murdered their child out of their paternal affection, wrote to a friend, recommending their dog and cat to his care. They thought, probably, that it was easier to make their dog and cat happy in this world than their child, and that keeping them would not be any great expense to their friend.[1]

[1] Richard Smith was a bookbinder, and a prisoner for debt within the liberty of the King's Bench; and this shocking tragedy was acted in 1732. Smith and his wife had been always industrious and frugal, invincibly honest, and remarkable for conjugal affection.

The earl of Scarborough has lately quitted life with the same indifference as he did his place of master of the horse. Having been told in the house of lords that he sided with the court, on account of the profitable post he held in it, "My lords," said he, "to convince you that my opinion is not influenced by any such consideration, I will instantly resign." He afterward found himself perplexed between a mistress he was fond of, but to whom he was under no engagements, and a woman whom he esteemed, and to whom he had made a promise of marriage. My lord Scarborough, therefore, killed himself to get rid of difficulty.

The many tragical stories of this nature, with which the English newspapers abound, have made the greater part of Europe imagine that the English are fonder of killing themselves than any other people; and yet I question much whether there are not as many madmen at Paris as at London; and if our newspapers were to keep an exact register of those who have either had the folly, or unhappy resolution to destroy themselves, we might in this respect be found to vie with the English. But our compilers of news are more prudent; the adventures of private persons are never set forth to public scandal in any of the papers licenced by the government; however, I believe I may venture to affirm that this rage of suicide will never become epidemic. Nature has sufficiently guarded against it, and hope and fear are the powerful curbs she makes use of to stop the hand of the wretch uplifted to be his own executioner.

I know it may be said, that there have been coun-

tries where a council was established to give licence to the people to kill themselves, when they could give sufficient reasons for doing it. To this I answer, that either the fact is false, or that such council found very little employment.

There is one thing indeed which may cause some surprise, and which I think deserves to be seriously discussed, which is, that almost all the great heroes among the Romans, during the civil wars, killed themselves when they lost a battle, and that we do not find an instance of a single leader, or great man, in the disputes of the League, the Fronde, or during the troubles of Italy and Germany, who put end to his life with his own hand. It is true, that these latter were Christians, and that there is great difference between a Christian soldier and a Pagan; and yet, how comes it that those very men who were so easily withheld by Christianity, from putting an end to their own lives, should be restrained either by that or any other consideration, when they had a mind to poison, assassinate, or publicly execute a vanquished enemy? Does not the Christian religion forbid this manner of taking away the life of a fellow-creature, if possible more than our own? The advocates for suicide tell us that it is very allowable to quit our house when we are weary of it. Agreed: but most men had rather lie in a bad house than sleep in the open fields.

I one day received a circular letter from an Englishman, in which he proposes a premium to the person who should the most clearly demonstrate that it was allowable for a man to kill himself. I made him

no answer, for I had nothing to prove to him, and he had only to examine within himself if he preferred death to life.

But then let us ask why Cato, Brutus, Cassius, Antony, Otho, and so many others gave themselves death with so much resolution, and that our leaders of parties suffered themselves to be taken alive by their enemies, or waste the remains of a wretched old age in a dungeon? Some refined wits pretend to say that the ancients had no real courage; that Cato acted like a coward in putting an end to his own life: and that he would have showed more greatness of soul in crouching beneath the victorious Cæsar. This may be very well in an ode, or as a figure in rhetoric; but it is very certain there must be some courage to resign a life coolly by the edge of a sword, some strength of mind thus to overcome the most powerful instinct of nature; in a word, that such an act shows a greater share of ferocity than weakness. When a sick man is in a frenzy, we cannot say he has no strength, though we may say it is the strength of a madman.

Self-murder was forbidden by the Pagan as well as by the Christian religion. There was even a place allotted in hell to those who put an end to their own lives. Witness these lines of the poet.

> Then crowds succeed, who prodigal of breath,
> Themselves anticipate the doom of death;
> Though free from guilt, they cast their lives away,
> And sad and sullen hate the golden day.
> Oh! with what joy the wretches now would bear
> Pain, toil, and woe, to breathe the vital air!
> In vain! by fate forever are they bound
> With dire Avernus, and the lake profound;
> And Styx with nine wide channels roars around.
>
> —Pitt.

This was the religion of the heathens; and notwithstanding the torments they were to endure in the other world, it was esteemed an honor to quit this by giving themselves death by their own hands; so contradictory are the manners of men! Is not the custom of duelling still unhappily accounted honorable among us, though prohibited by reason, by religion, and by all laws, divine and human? If Cato and Cæsar, Antony and Augustus did not challenge each other to a duel, it was not that they were less brave than ourselves. If the duke of Montmorency, Marshal Marillac, de Thou, Cinq-Mars, and many others, rather chose to be dragged to execution like the vilest miscreants, than put an end to their own lives like Cato and Brutus, it was not that they had less courage than those Romans; the true reason is, that it was not then the fashion at Paris to kill oneself on such occasions; whereas it was an established custom with the Romans.

The women on the Malabar coast throw themselves alive into the flames, in which the bodies of their dead husbands are burning. Is it because they have more resolution than Cornelia? No; but the custom of the country is for wives to burn themselves.

**Custom and fancy of our fate decide,**
**And what is this man's shame is t'other's pride.**

## ENGLISH TRAGEDY.

The English had a regular theatre, as well as the Spaniards, while the French had as yet but booths. Shakespeare, whom the English consider as

another Sophocles, flourished about the time of Lope de Vega; he was properly the creator of their theatre. His genius was at once strong and abundant, natural and sublime, but without the smallest spark of taste, and void of the remotest idea of the rules. I will venture to tell you a bold but yet undoubted truth; which is, that the merit of this author has been the ruin of the English stage: there are in him scenes so perfectly beautiful, and passages so very full of the great and terrible, spread up and down those monstrous farces of his which they have christened tragedies, that his pieces have always been played with prodigious success. Time, which alone is capable of establishing the reputation of authors, serves at length to consecrate their very defects. The greater part of those extravagant passages, and of that bombast which abounds in his works, have, in the course of a hundred and fifty years, acquired a kind of title to pass for the true sublime. Their modern authors are, generally speaking, no more than copiers of him, though what succeeded in Shakespeare is hissed in them; and you know the veneration they entertain for this author increases in proportion to their contempt of the moderns. They never once reflect that it is absurd to pretend to imitate him; and it is wholly owing to the ill success of those copiers, and not to their want of capacity, that he is thought inimitable.

You know that in the tragedy of the "Moor of Venice," a very interesting piece, a husband smothers his wife on the stage, and the poor woman dies asserting her innocence. You are not ignorant that in

"Hamlet" a couple of grave-diggers dig a grave upon the stage, singing and drinking at their work, and passing the low jokes common to this sort of people, on the skulls they throw up; but what will most astonish you is that these fooleries have been imitated.

In the reign of Charles II., which was the reign of politeness, and the era of the fine arts, Otway, in his "Venice Preserved," introduced the senator Antonio, and his courtesan, Aquilina, in the midst of the horrors of Bedemar's conspiracy; the old senator plays all the monkey-tricks, on the stage, of an old impotent crazy lecher. He mimics by turns a bull, and a dog, and he bites his mistress' legs, who alternately whips and kicks him. These buffooneries, however, calculated to please the rabble, have since been omitted in the representation of this piece; but in "Julius Cæsar," the idle jests of Roman shoemakers and cobblers are still introduced on the stage with Cassius and Brutus.

You will, no doubt, lament that those who have hitherto spoken to you of the English stage, and particularly of the celebrated Shakespeare, have pointed out only his errors, and that no one has translated those striking passages in this great man which atone for all his faults. To this I shall answer that it is very easy to recount in prose the absurdities of a poet, but very difficult to translate his fine verses; those who set themselves up for critics of celebrated writers generally compile volumes; but I had rather read two pages which present only their beauties; for I shall always concur with all men of taste in this

opinion, that there is more to be learned in a dozen verses of Homer or Virgil, than in all the criticisms on those great men.

I have ventured to translate some passages of the best English poets, and I begin with one of Shakespeare's. Be indulgent to the copy, in honor to the original; and always remember, that when you see a translation, you perceive only a faint copy of a fine picture. I have selected the soliloquy in the tragedy of "Hamlet," which is universally known, and begins with this line: "To be, or not to be! that is the question!" It is Hamlet, prince of Denmark, who speaks.[1]

*Demeure, il faut choifir, & paffer à l'instant*
*De la vie à la mort, ou de l'être au néant.*
*Dieux justes, s'il en est, éclairez mon courage.*
*Faut-il vieillir courbé fous la main qui m'outrage,*
*Supporter, ou finir mon malheur & mon sort?*
*Qui suis-je? Que m'arrête? Et qu'est-ce que la mort?*
*C'est la fin de nos maux, c'est mon unique asile;*
*Après de longs transports, c'est un sommeil tranquille.*
*On s'endort, & tout meurt; mais un affreux réveil*
*Doit succéder peut-être aux douceurs du sommeil.*
*On nous menace, on dit, que cette courte vie*
*De tourmens éternels est aussitôt suivie.*
*O mort!*

*O mort! moment fatal! affreuse éternité!*
*Tout cœur à ton seul nom se glace épouvanté.*
*Eh! qui pourrait sans toi supporter cette vie?*
*De nos Prêtres menteurs bénir l'hypocrisie?*
*D'une indigne maîtresse encenser les erreurs?*
*Ramper sous un Ministre, adorer ses hauteurs?*
*Et montrer les langueurs de son ame abattue,*
*A des amis ingrats, qui détournent la vue?*
*La mort serait trop douce en ses extrémités.*
*Mais le scrupule parle, & nous crie, Arrêtez.*
*Il défend à nos mains cet heureux homicide,*
*Et d'un Héros guerrier, fait un Chrétien timide.*

[1] A translation of this will be found in the article on the "English Theatre," in this volume.

Do not imagine that I have given you the English word for word—woe be to those literal translators, who, by rendering every single word, enervate the sense! It is in this case that we may truly say, "The letter kills, and the spirit giveth life."

I shall now give you a passage from the famous Dryden, an English poet who flourished in the reign of Charles II.; an author more fertile than judicious, who would have preserved an unblemished reputation, if he had written only the tenth part of his works.

The passage begins thus:

> When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
> Yet, fooled by hope, men favor the deceit . . .

*De desseins en regrets, & d'erreurs en désirs,*
*Les mortels insensés promènent leur folie,*
*Dans des malheurs présens, dans l'espoir des plaisirs.*
*Nous ne vivons jamais, nous attendons la vie.*
*Demain, demain, dit-on, va combler tous nos vœux.*
*Demain vient, & nous laisse encor plus malheureux.*
*Quelle est l'erreur, hélas! du soin qui nous dévore?*
*Nul de nous ne voudrait recommencer son cours.*
*De nos premiers momens nous maudissons l'aurore,*
*Et de la nuit qui vient, nous attendons encore*
*Ce qu'ont en vain promis les plus beaux de nos jours, etc.*

It is in these detached sentences that the English tragedies have hitherto excelled. Their pieces, almost always barbarous, void of decency, order, and probability, have yet, amidst this night of darkness, their splendid days of light: their style is too stiff, too unnatural, too much copied from the Hebrew writers, and too full of Asiatic bombast; but then the mind is transported to an amazing height, soaring on the pinions of the metaphorical style which adorns the English language.

It sometimes seems as if nature were not the same in England as elsewhere. This same Dryden, in his farce of "Don Sebastian, King of Portugal," which he calls a tragedy, makes an officer give the following reply to that monarch:

SEBASTIAN—Be warned, and know me for thy king.
DORAX—Too well I know thee, but for king no more:
This is not Lisbon, nor the circle this,
Where, like a statue, thou hast stood besieged
By sycophants and fools, the growth of courts.
Where thy gulled eyes, in all the gaudy round,
Met nothing but a lie in every face;
And the gross flattery of a gaping crowd,
Envious who first should catch, and first applaud
The stuff, or royal nonsense.

This speech is in the English taste; and the whole piece is full of buffoonery. How shall we reconcile, say our critics, so much good sense with such absurdity, so much meanness with such sublimity of expression? Nothing so easy; let it be remembered that they were written by men. The Spanish stage has all the faults of the English, without its beauties; and, in reality, what were the Greek authors? what Euripides, who, in the same piece, paints so affecting, so noble a picture of Alcestes sacrificing herself to the manes of her husband, and puts into the mouth of Admetes and his father such gross puerilities, that have puzzled even his commentators? A reader must have great patience and fortitude not to find Homer's sleepy fit sometimes a little tedious, and his dreams insipid. It will require many ages to purify good taste. Virgil among the Romans, Racine among the French, were the first who always preserved a purity of taste in capital pieces.

Addison was the first Englishman who wrote a

rational tragedy; but I should pity him if he had only made it barely rational. His tragedy of "Cato" is written from the beginning to the end with that masterly and energic elegance of which Corneille first gave us such fine examples in his unequalled style. It appears to me that this piece is adapted to an audience somewhat philosophic, and very republican. I much doubt if our young ladies and *petits-maîtres* would have relished Cato in his nightgown, reading Plato's dialogues, and making reflections on the immortality of the soul: but those who soar above the customs, the prejudices, and the foibles of their own nation, who are of every age, and of every country, those who prefer philosophic grandeur to soft tales of love, will be pleased to find here a copy, though an imperfect one, of that sublime scene. It seems as if Addison, in this fine soliloquy, aimed at rivalling Shakespeare. I will translate the one as I did the other; I mean, with that freedom without which we are too apt to wander from the original, by endeavoring at too close an imitation. The groundwork is faithfully portrayed, I shall only add a few shades. Not being able to equal him, I must attempt to improve upon him.

*Oui, Platon, tu dis vrai, notre âme est immortelle,*
*C'est un Dieu qui lui parle, un Dieu qui vit en elle.*
*Eh! d'où viendrait sans lui se grand pressentiment,*
*Ce dégoût des faux biens, cette horreur du néant?*
*Vers des siècles sans fin je sens que tu m'entraînes.*
*Du monde & de mes sens je vais briser les chaînes,*
*Et m'ouvrir loin d'un corps dan la fange arrêté*
*Les portes de la vie & de l'éternité.*
*L'éternité! quel mot consolant & terrible!*
*O lumière! O nuage! O profondeur horrible!*
*Que suis-je? où suis-je? où vais-je! & d où suis-je tiré?*
*Dans quels climats nouveaux, dans quel monde ignoré,*

*Le moment du trépas va-t-il plonger mon être?*
*Où sera cet esprit qui ne peut se connaître?*
*Que me préparez-vous, abîmes ténébreux?*
*Allons, s'il est un Dieu, Caton doit être heureux.*
*Il est un sans doute, & je suis son ouvrage.*
*Lui-même au cœur du juste il empreint son image.*
*Il doit venger sa cause & punir les pervers.*
*Mais comment! dans quel temps? & dans quel Univers?*
*Ici la vertu pleure, & l'audace l'opprime;*
*L'innocence à genoux y tend la gorge au crime;*
*La fortune y domine, & tout y suit son char.*
*Ce globe infortuné fut formé pour César.*
*Hâtons nous de sortir d'une prison funeste.*
*Je te verrai sans ombre, ô vérité céleste!*
*Tu te caches de nous dans nos jours de sommeil:*
*Cette vie est un songe, & la mort un réveil.*

In this tragedy of a patriot and philosopher, the character of Cato appears to me to be one of the most complete that ever appeared on any stage. The Cato of Addison is, in my opinion, greatly superior to the Cornelia of Pierre Corneille, for he is continually great without ostentation; and the part of Cornelia, besides being an unnecessary one, is in many places too declamatory; she would always be the heroine, and Cato never perceives that he is the hero.

It is a great pity that so fine a piece should not be a complete tragedy; unconnected scenes, which often leave the stage empty, injudicious and tedious apart or aside speeches, cold and insipid amours, a conspiracy quite foreign to the piece, a certain Sempronius disgusted and killed on the stage; all these put together render the celebrated tragedy of "Cato" a performance that our comedians would never venture to present, even if we were of the same way of thinking as the Romans, or the English themselves. The barbarism and irregularity of the theatre at Lon-

don made an impression on Addison's better judgment: methinks I see in him the Czar Peter, who, in reforming the Russians, still retained some prejudices of his education, and of the manners of his country.

The custom of introducing love, right or wrong, into dramatic works, passed over from Paris to London about the year 1660, with our ribbons and perukes. The ladies, who there as well as here embellish the theatre, would no longer suffer any other but love scenes on the stage. The sage Addison had the effeminate complaisance to bend the severity of his character to the manners of his time, and spoiled a masterpiece to comply with the reigning mode.

Since his time the pieces have become more regular, the people more difficult, and the authors more timid. I have seen very decent, but very flat, modern compositions: it seems as if the English poets had hitherto been born to produce only irregular beauties.

The poetic genius of the English resembles, at this day, a spreading tree planted by nature, shooting forth at random a thousand branches, and growing with unequal strength: it dies if you force its nature, or shape it into a regular tree, fit for the gardens of Marly.

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## ON THE ENGLISH COMEDY.

If in most of the English tragedies the heroes are awkward and the heroines extravagant, in return the style is more natural in comedy; but then

this style would appear to us rather that of debauchery than of politeness; it distinguishes everything by its proper name; a woman, enraged at her lover, wishes him the pox; a drunkard, in a piece that is very often performed, is disguised like a priest, makes a great riot, and is arrested by the watch: he calls himself a curate; he is asked what cure he has; and he replies, "An excellent one for the . . . ." In one of the most decent comedies, "The Careless Husband," this husband is represented having his head rubbed by a servant-maid, who is seated by his side: his wife enters, and exclaims: "To what power may one not arrive by being a whore!" Some cynics justify these gross expressions, and quote the example of Horace, who describes, by their proper names, all the parts of the human body, and all the pleasures they give. These are images that succeed with us only when properly veiled; but Horace, who seemed made for the stews as well as for the court, and who perfectly understood the customs of both, speaks as freely of the way of a man with a maid, as if he was describing a walk, or a collation. It has been observed, that the Romans, in the days of Augustus, were as polite as the Parisians are at present; and that this very Horace, who praises the emperor Augustus for reforming the manners, complied, without scruple, with the customs of the times, which permitted the promiscuous use of girls and boys, and of the proper names of things. Strange it is—if anything can be said to be so—that Horace, while speaking the language of a debauchee, should be the favorite of a reformer; and that Ovid, for

speaking only the language of gallantry, should be exiled by a debauchee, an impostor, an assassin, called Octavius, who acquired the empire by crimes which merited death.

However this be, Bayle pretends that expressions are indifferent, in which he, the cynics, and the Stoics, deceive themselves; for everything has different names which represent it under different aspects, and afford different ideas of it. The words "magistrate" and "lawyer," "gentleman" and "squire," "officer" and "sharper," "monk" and "friar," have not the same signification. The consummation of marriage, and everything that contributes to the completion of this great work, will be differently expressed by the parson, the husband, the physician, and the rake. The word the latter of these would make use of would awaken the idea of pleasure, the terms the physician would explain himself in would put you in mind of a dead body, the husband would make that understood with decency which the young libertine had described immodestly, and the parson would attempt to give you the idea of a sacrament. Words then are not in themselves indifferent; for they are not synonymous.

It must further be considered, that though the Romans permitted these gross expressions in satires, which were read but by a few people, they never suffered indecent words on the stage; for, as La Fontaine says: "Chaste are the ears, although the eyes are wanton." In a word, no expression should be made use of in public, which a modest woman would be ashamed to repeat.

The English have stolen, disguised, and mangled, most of Molière's plays. They attempted to make a Tartuffe. It was impossible that this subject should succeed at London, because the portrait of a stranger affords very little pleasure. One of the blessings of the English nation is, that she has no Tartuffes: to have hypocrites, it is necessary to have bigots; but the name of bigot is almost unknown there, while that of an honest man is common. He sees no dotards committing to others the care of their souls; no petty tyrants establishing a despotic empire, in some quarter of the city, over a set of superannuated females, who were once coquettes, and always weak; and over men still more weak and despicable. Philosophy, liberty, and the climate, lead the way to misanthropy. London, which has no Tartuffes, abounds with Timons. The "Plain Dealer" is one of the best English comedies: it was written at the time when Charles II. and his splendid court were endeavoring to laugh away the settled gloom that had overspread the nation. Wycherly, the author of this comedy, was the professed admirer of the duchess of Cleveland, the king's mistress. This man, who passed his life in the gay world, as it is called, painted its follies and absurdities in the strongest colors. The strokes are bolder in Wycherly's piece than in Molière's; but they are not so delicate, nor so refined. The English author has corrected the only fault in Molière's piece, the want of plot and intrigue: the English comedy is interesting, the intrigue is ingenious, but too bold for our manners.

A captain of a ship, of distinguished courage and frankness, and a professed despiser of mankind, has a sincere and prudent friend whom he mistrusts, and a mistress, by whom he is tenderly beloved, whom he slights: whilst he places all his confidence in a false friend, the most unworthy of men; and gives his heart to a jilt, the most perfidious of her sex. He believes, however, that this woman is a Penelope, and this false friend a Cato: he sets out on an expedition against the Dutch, and leaves all his money, jewels, and other effects, in the hands of this woman to the care of this friend he so firmly relies on; while the true friend, whom he mistrusts, embarks with him, and the lady, to whom he has not deigned to pay the least regard, disguises herself in the habit of a page, and performs the voyage with him, without discovering her sex the whole time.

The captain's ship being blown up in an engagement, he returns to London in the utmost distress, accompanied by his friend and the page, without knowing the friendship of the one, or the love of the other. He goes immediately to that paragon of women from whom he expects to receive his strong box, and a fresh proof of her fidelity. He finds her married to the sharper he had confided in, and can get no account of the treasure he had committed to her charge. The good man will hardly believe that so virtuous a woman could be guilty of such baseness; when the better to convince him of it, this honest lady falls in love with the little page, and attempts to take him away by force: but as it is necessary, in a dramatic piece, that justice should take

place, vice be punished, and virtue meet its reward, at the close of the catastrophe, the captain supplied the place of the page, goes to bed to his inconstant mistress, cuckolds his treacherous friend, runs him through the body, recovers the remains of his effects, and marries his page. You will observe, that this piece is interlarded with an old litigious woman, related to the captain, who is one of the merriest creatures, and one of the best characters, on the stage.

Wycherly has taken another piece from Molière not less bold and singular; it is a sort of "School for Women." The principal character in the piece is a droll libertine, the terror of the husbands of London; who, to make sure of his business, spreads a report, that, in a late illness, his surgeons had found it necessary to make him a eunuch. Having this curious character, the husbands grant him free access to their wives, and his only difficulty is where to fix his choice. However, at last, he gives the preference to a little country-woman, who has a great share of innocence, with a natural warmth of constitution, by which she makes her husband a cuckold with a good will and readiness that far exceeds the premeditated malice of experienced dames. This piece is not indeed "The School of Morality"; but it is "The School of Wit and True Comic Humor."

The comedies of Sir John Vanbrugh are more facetious, but less ingenious. The knight was a man of pleasure, and besides a poet and an architect. It is remarked, that he wrote as delicately and as elegantly as he built clumsily: it was he who built the famous castle of Blenheim, the heavy but durable

monument of our unfortunate battle of Höchstädt. If the apartments were only as large as the walls are thick, this mansion would be convenient enough. In Sir John Vanbrugh's epitaph, the earth is invoked to lie heavy on him, who, when living, had laid such heavy loads upon it. This gentleman took a tour into France just before the curious war of 1701, and was put into the Bastille, where he remained some time, without knowing what it was that had procured him this mark of distinction from our ministry. He wrote a comedy in the Bastille, and, what is in my opinion very remarkable, there is not in all the piece the least stroke against the country where he suffered this violence.

Of all the English writers, the late Mr. Congreve has carried the glory of the comic theatre to the highest pitch. He wrote but few pieces, but they are all excellent of their kind: the laws of the drama are strictly observed in them; they are full of characters elegantly varied; no mean pleasantry, not the least indecency, is introduced; you find in every part the language of politeness, even in describing the actions of knaves; which proves that he knew the world, and kept what is called good company. His comedies are the most sprightly and correct, Sir John Vanbrugh's the gayest, and Wycherly's the boldest. It is to be observed, that none of these sublime wits have spoken ill of Molière: it is only writers of no repute that have vilified this great man. In a word, do not expect from me any extracts from these English performances that I am so great an advocate of; nor that I should give you a single *bon*

*mot* or jest from Congreve or Wycherly. One cannot laugh in a translation. If you would be acquainted with the English comedy, you must go to London: you must reside there three years; you must learn the language perfectly, and constantly frequent the theatre. I take no great pleasure in reading Plautus or Aristophanes, because I am neither Greek nor Roman. The delicate turn of *bon mots,* the allusion, and the *apropos,* are all lost to a foreigner.

It is not the same in tragedy; that consists alone in the sublime passions, and heroic fooleries, consecrated by the stale error of fables and histories. Œdipus and Electra belong as much to us, to the English, and to the Spaniards, as to the Greeks: but true comedy is the living picture of the absurdities of a country; and, if you are not thoroughly acquainted with the country, you can hardly judge of the painting.

It has been objected to the English, that their scene is bloody, and often covered with dead bodies; that their gladiators fight half naked before young girls, and often return from the combat with the loss of a nose or a cheek. In answer to this, they tell you that they imitate the Greeks in tragedy, and the Romans in the act of cutting off noses: but their theatre is widely different from that of Sophocles and Euripides; and, with respect to the Romans, it must be acknowledged that a nose or a cheek is a trifle in comparison with that multitude of victims that mutually butchered each other in the circus for the diversion of the Roman ladies.

The English have sometimes had dances in their comedies, which were allegorical, and of a very singular taste. Despotic power and a republican state were represented by a very gallant dance in 1709. A king appears in the dance, who, after a few capers, gives his prime minister a very severe kick on the . . . . the minister bestows it on a second person, the second on a third, and, in fine, he who received the last represented the bulk of the nation, which had nobody to revenge itself on: all was performed in cadence. The republican government was represented by a round dance, where everyone equally received and returned the blow. This, however, is the country that has given birth to Addisons, Popes, Lockes, and Newtons.

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## THE COMEDY OF THE SCOTCH-WOMAN.

*Letter from the Translator of "The Scotch-Woman" to Count L'Auragais.*

[Voltaire indulged a whim in making believe that this comedy was written by "M. Hume, brother of M. David Hume, the celebrated philosopher." This gained it a favorable hearing. It was supposed to have been translated by one "Jerôme Carré," a pseudonym elsewhere used by Voltaire. His "M. Hume" refers to Home, the author of the tragedy "Douglas." Though of secondary interest, the correspondence fits into these papers on British topics.]

Sir:—The little trifle which I have the honor to put under your protection, is nothing more than an excuse for talking to you with freedom. You have conferred an eternal obligation on the fine arts and true taste, by generously contributing everything in your power toward a theatre in Paris, more worthy

of that illustrious city than any she has hitherto seen.

If we no longer see Cæsar and Ptolemy, Athalie, and Jehoida, Mérope and her son crowded upon the stage, and surrounded by a set of wild and licentious young fellows; if our representations have infinitely more decency than ever they had before, it is to you we are indebted for this reformation: the favor done to us is still more considerable, as by our excellency in tragedy and comedy we are distinguished above all nations: however, with regard to other things, we may be rivalled, or even excelled. We have some good philosophers amongst us, but must fairly acknowledge that we are but the followers of Newton, Locke, and Galileo. If France can boast of some historians, yet the Spaniards, the Italians, nay and even the English, may in this respect dispute the preeminence with us. Massillon alone passes with our men of taste here for a tolerably good orator; but how far beneath Archbishop Tillotson is he in the eyes of all Europe beside! I don't pretend to decide the merit of men of genius, nor is my hand strong enough to hold the balance between them; I only tell you what other people think, and you, sir, who have travelled, must know that every people has its favorite authors, whom it always prefers to those of other nations.

If you descend from works of wit to those where the hand is principally concerned, what painter have we comparable to the great Italian masters? It is only indeed in the Sophoclean art that we are allowed by all the world to excel; and this, no doubt,

is the reason why, in many parts of Italy, they often play our pieces, either in our language or their own, and that French theatres are found at St. Petersburg and Vienna.

All that could be found fault with on our stage was the want of action and scenery: our tragedies were often nothing but long conversations in five acts. How could we hazard those pompous spectacles, those striking pictures, those grand and terrible actions, which, well conducted, have the finest effect; how were we to bring the bleeding body of Cæsar on the stage; how could we make a desperate queen go down into her husband's tomb, and come out of it again dying by the hand of her son? Was it possible to do this in the midst of a crowd that hid from the view of the spectators, mother, son, tomb and all, and took away all the terror of the scene by a contrast truly ridiculous?

From these glaring absurdities you, sir, have in a great measure set us free; and when any writers of genius shall rise up capable of uniting the pomp of scenery, and the lively representation of an action, at the same time both probable and affecting, to strong thoughts, and that fine and natural poetry which constitutes the true merit of the drama; to you, sir, whenever that shall happen, will be due the thanks of our posterity.

But we must not leave the care of this to posterity, but have the courage to tell our own age what useful and noble works our contemporaries are able to produce: the just praise of merit is a perfume reserved only to embalm the dead. Let a man do

anything ever so well, while he lives, nobody makes mention of it; or if they do, his merit is always extenuated, or detracted from; and the moment he is dead, that merit is as much exaggerated, on purpose to lessen the reputation of those who are still living.

I would at least have all who read this little work know that there is in Paris more than one worthy and unfortunate man whom you have relieved; and that while you spend your leisure hours in the laborious and painful revival of a useful art lost in Asia, where it was invented, you have revived also a secret yet more rare—that of assisting indigent virtue by concealed charity and beneficence.

I am not ignorant that there is in Paris, and in what is called the polite world, a set of men, who would ridicule those good actions which they are not capable of performing; and it is my knowledge of them, sir, which doubles my respect for you.

P. S.—There is no occasion for signing my name to this letter, as I have never put it at the bottom of any of my works; and when the world sees it at the head of any book, or in any playhouse bill, let them place it to the account of the billsticker or the bookseller.

TO THE GENTLEMEN OF PARIS.

GENTLEMEN:—I am obliged by the illustrious Mr. F—— to expose myself to you face to face; I shall talk to you respectfully and sentimentally; my complaint shall be marked with decorum, and enlightened by the torch of truth. I hope Mr. F—— will be confounded when he comes face to face before those honest gentlemen who are not used to

favor the malpractices of those who, not being sentimental, make a trade of insulting Tierce & Quart, without any provocation, as Cicero says in his oration "*Pro Murena,*" page 4.

My name, gentlemen, is Jerome Carré, and I am a native of Montauban, a poor man, without any friends or fortune; and as I have changed my mind about going to Montauban because Mr. L. F.——, of P——, persecutes me there, I am come to implore the protection of the Parisians. I have translated the comedy of "The Scotch-Woman" from Mr. Hume. The comedians, both French and Italian, would have represented it, and it might have been played perhaps five or six times, but Mr. F—— freely employs all his interest and authority to prevent my translation from appearing: he who, while he was a Jesuit, encouraged young men so much, is now their enemy: he has written a whole paper against me, and begins by maliciously stating that my translation comes from Geneva, on purpose to make me suspected for a heretic. Moreover, he calls Mr. Hume, Mr. Home; and afterward says that Mr. Hume, the clergyman, author of this piece, is no relative of Mr. Hume, the philosopher. Let him only consult the "*Journal Encyclopédique*" of the month of April, 1758, which I look upon to be the best of a hundred and sixty-three journals that appear in Europe every month; there he will meet with this piece of intelligence, page 137: "The author of 'Douglas' is one Hume, a clergyman, a relation of the famous David Hume, so well known for his impiety."

I cannot possibly tell whether Mr. David Hume

is impious or not; if he is, I am sorry for it, and shall pray to God for him as I should; it follows, however, that Mr. Hume, the clergyman, the relative of David Hume, is author of "The Scotch-Woman," which is all we wanted to prove; I must own to my shame, that I did believe him to be his brother; but be he brother or cousin, certain it is, that he is the author of "The Scotch-Woman." It is true, indeed, that in the journal above cited, "The Scotch-Woman" is not expressly named; mention is only made of "Agis" and "Douglas," but that is a trifle; so undoubtedly is he the author of "The Scotch-Woman," that I have by me several of his letters, wherein he thanks me for having translated it, one of which I shall submit to the charitable reader.

"My Dear Translator:—You have committed many blunders in your performance, you have quite spoiled the character of Wasp, and struck out his punishment at the end of the piece," etc.

It is true that I have softened a little the features of Wasp, but it was by advice of some of the best judges in Paris: the French politeness will not admit of some phrases which English freedom makes no scruple of adopting: if I am to blame, it is from excess of delicacy; and I hope the gentlemen of Paris, whose protection I implore, will pardon the faults of my piece, in consideration of my extreme unwillingness to offend them.

Mr. Hume seems to have written his comedy solely to introduce Wasp, whereas I have retrenched as much as I possibly could of his character, as I have likewise part of Lady Alton's, that I might

depart less from your manners, and convince you at the same time of my great respect for the ladies. Mr. F——, with a view of prejudicing me, says, in his paper, p. 114, that he is himself frequently called Wasp, and that many persons of merit have frequently given him that name; but pray, gentlemen, what has this to do with the English character in Mr. Hume's play? You see he only wants a pretext to deprive me of that protection which I am here entreating you to honor me with; but pray, gentlemen, observe how far his malice carries him: he says, p. 115, that a report did for a long time prevail, that he had been condemned to the galleys, but affirms that the sentence did never take place; but really, gentlemen, whether he ever was sent to the galleys, or may be hereafter, what has this to do with a translation from an English comedy? He talks of the reasons which he says might have brought this misfortune upon him; I shall not enter into his reasons; whether they be good or not, can give Mr. Hume no concern: whether he goes to the galleys or not, I am equally the translator of "The Scotch-Woman.' I beg, gentlemen, your protection against him, and that you will receive this little piece with that indulgence which you always grant to strangers. I have the honor to be, with the profoundest respect,

Gentlemen,

your most obedient humble servant,

Jerome Carré.

Native of Montauban, living near the *impasse* of St. Thomas; I call *impasse,* gentlemen, what you term *cul de sac,* as a street, I apprehend, can signify

neither an a—e nor a sack; therefore beg you will make use of the word *impasse,* which is noble, sonorous, intelligible, and absolutely necessary, instead of *cul,* and in spite of Sir F——, heretofore T——.

ADVERTISEMENT.

This letter from Mr. Jerome Carré had its desired effect. The piece was represented the beginning of August, 1760; they began late, and somebody asking why they stayed so long, perhaps, replied aloud, a man of wit, Mr. F—— is gone up to the Hôtel-de-Ville. As this Mr. F—— was weak enough to fancy himself pointed at in the comedy of "The Scotch-Woman," though Mr. Hume had never seen him in his life, the audience were kind enough to be of the same opinion. The comedy was got by heart, by half the town, before ever it was played; and notwithstanding, was received with prodigious applause. F—— was weak enough to assert, in a certain paper, called *"L'Année Littéraire,"* that "The Scotch-Woman's" success was owing to a cabal of twelve or fifteen hundred persons who had a sovereign hatred and contempt for him; but Mr. Jerome Carré was far from making any such cabals: all Paris knows he is incapable of doing it; besides, that he had never set eyes on F——, and could not conceive the reason why all the spectators seemed to find him out in the character of Wasp. A famous lawyer, at the second representation, cried out, "Courage, Mr. Carré, avenge the public." The pit and boxes applauded this speech by repeated claps. Carré, on quitting the theatre, was embraced by above a hundred persons.

"How much we are obliged to you," said they, "Mr. Carré, for doing justice on this man, whose manners are even more detestable than his works." "O gentlemen," replied Carré, "you do me more honor than I deserve; I am nothing more than the poor translator of a comedy that is full of interesting scenes and good morality."

As he was talking thus upon the stairs, he was saluted with two kisses by the w—— of F——. "How much I am obliged to you," said she, "for thus punishing my h——, but you will never make him better." The innocent Carré was quite confounded; he could not conceive how an English character should be taken for a Frenchman, named F——, and that all France should thus compliment him on so good a likeness. The young man learned by this adventure how much caution is necessary in the world; and found out at the same time that whenever one draws a good portrait of a ridiculous fellow, there will be always some one found out that must resemble him.

The part of Wasp in the play was very inconsiderable, and contributed but little to its real merit of success; for in several of the provinces it received as much applause as in Paris. It may, perhaps, here be answered that this Wasp was as much esteemed in the provinces as in the capital; but it is more probable that the success of Mr. Hume's piece was owing to the lively and interesting situations to be found in it. Describe a coxcomb, and you may only succeed with a few persons; make your play interesting, and you will please all the world.

Be that as it may, we will lay before our readers the translation of a letter from my Lord Boldthinker,[1] to the supposed Hume, on his piece called "The Scotch-Woman."

"I believe, my dear Hume, you have yet some talents which you are accountable for to your country; it is not enough to have sacrificed this vile Wasp to public derision on all the stages of Europe, where your amiable and virtuous 'Scotch-Woman' appears; do more, I beseech you; expose on the stage all those base persecutors of literature, all those hypocrites, who, blackened with every vice themselves, calumniate every virtue in others; bring before the public tribunal those enraged fanatics who spit their venom on innocence; those false slaves who fawn on you with one eye and threaten you with the other; who are afraid to open their mouths before a philosopher, and endeavor secretly to ruin him; expose in open day those detestable cabals that would bury mankind once more in darkness and ignorance. You have already kept silence too long; nothing is gained by trying to soften the obstinate and perverse. There is no other means to render letters respectable but by making those tremble who injure them. Pope had recourse to this before he died; in his 'Dunciad' he branded all those with everlasting ridicule who had deserved it; they disappeared immediately and rose up no more; the whole nation applauded him. If the malevolence and ill-nature of the world did at first give some degree of reputation to the enemies of Pope and

[1] Lord Bolingbroke.

Swift, reason soon recovered her rights. Our Zoiluses are seldom supported for any long time. Satire is a weapon which we ought to make use of in vindication of human nature; it is not only the Pantolabi and Nomentani, but the Anituses and Melituses of the age whom we ought to scourge. Good verse may transmit to posterity the glory of worthy men and the infamy of bad ones. Go on in your labors, you will never want proper subjects . . . ."

PREFACE.

The comedy, a translation of which we have here submitted to the lovers of literature, was written by Mr. Hume, pastor of the church of Edinburgh, already well known by his two fine tragedies played in London; a relative and friend of the celebrated philosopher Mr. Hume, who has with so much boldness and sagacity sounded the depths of metaphysics and morality. These two philosophers do equal honor to Scotland, their native country.

The comedy, entitled "The Scotch-Woman," seems to be one of those performances which must succeed in every language, as it is a lively portrait of nature, which is everywhere the same; the author has all the simplicity and truth of the valuable Goldoni, joined, perhaps, to more intrigue, plots and spirit. The catastrophe, the character of the heroine and that of Freeport, are different from anything that has ever been exhibited on the French stage, and yet is all pure nature. This piece seems written in the taste of those English romances which have of late years been so well received; there is the

same fine picture of the manners, and some lively touches strongly resembling them; nothing stiff or labored; no affectation of wit, or contemptible desire of showing the author, instead of his characters; nothing foreign to the subject; no parade of learning, or trivial maxims to fill up the vacancy of the scene; common justice obliged us to say thus much of the celebrated author. We must, at the same time, confess that we thought ourselves, by the advice of some excellent critics, under the necessity of retrenching something from the part of Wasp in the last act; he was punished, as it was very proper he should be, at the conclusion of the piece; but this poetical justice seemed to throw in a degree of coldness that hurt the lively and interesting catastrophe.

The character of Wasp is withal so base and detestable that we were willing to spare our readers the too frequent view of a thing rather disgusting than comic; we own, indeed, that it is in nature; for in all great cities, where the freedom of the press subsists, we always find some of these wretches who get a livelihood by their impudence; these subaltern Aretines, who get their bread by doing and speaking evil, under the pretext of serving the cause of literature; as if the worms that gnaw the fruits and flowers could ever be useful to them.

One of those illustrious literati, or to express ourselves more properly, one of those two men of genius who presided over the *"Dictionnaire Encyclopédique,"* that work so necessary to mankind, the suspension of which has put all Europe into a

panic, one of these fine great men, in some essays composed by him for his amusement on the art of comedy, has most judiciously remarked that we should bring on the stage the several states and conditions of men. The employment of Mr. Hume's Wasp is in England a kind of business; there is even a tax raised on the papers written by these gentlemen. Neither the business nor the character seem worthy of the French stage, but the English pen contemns nothing, but often takes pleasure in representing objects whose meanness would offend other nations. The English never mind whether the subject be low or not, provided it be true; they tell us that comedy has a right to handle all characters and all conditions; that everything which is in nature should be painted; that we have a false delicacy, and that the most contemptible character may serve as a contrast for the best and most amiable.

I must here add, in justification of Mr. Hume, that he has had art enough not to bring on his Wasp; but in those parts where the story is not interesting he has imitated those painters who give us a toad, a lizard, or a snake, in one corner of the picture, still preserving the dignity of the principal figures.

What strikes us most remarkably in this piece is that the unities of time, place and action are scrupulously observed. It has withal a merit very seldom found in English or Italian plays, that the stage is never empty. Nothing is more common or more disagreeable than to see two actors go off, and two others come on in their places, without being called

or expected. This intolerable fault is not to be found in "The Scotch-Woman."

With regard to the nature of this piece, it is, properly speaking, high comedy, with a mixture of the simple. The man of true taste and delicacy prefers the smile of the soul to vulgar laughter. There are some parts of it so tender as even to draw tears, though without a studied affectation of the pathetic in any of the characters; for in like manner as true pleasantry consists in not endeavoring to be pleasant, so he who moves us never labors to do it; he is no rhetorician, everything comes from the heart. Woe be to him in any kind of writing who is over fond of pleasing! We are not certain whether this piece could possibly be represented at Paris; our condition and manner of life, which prevent our going often to public spectacles, make it impossible for us to judge what effect an English performance would have in France; we shall only say that, in spite of all our endeavors to do justice to the original, we are far from coming up to the merit of Mr. Hume's expressions, which are always strong and natural; but the principal beauty of this comedy is the excellence of its moral, suitable to the gravity of the author's function, at the same time that it has all those lively graces which are so agreeable to the polite world.

Comedy thus written is certainly one of the noblest efforts of the human soul; we must acknowledge it is an art, and a very difficult one; anybody may compile facts; it is easy to learn trigonometry; but every art requires genius, and genius is extremely rare and uncommon.

We cannot finish this preface better than by an extract from our countryman, Montaigne, on spectacles:

"I have played the principal parts in the Latin tragedies of Buchanan and Muretus, which were extremely well represented in our college at Guienne; Andreas Goveanus, our principal, was in this, as well as every other respect, certainly one of the best principals in France, and always superintended these things. It is an exercise which I am far from disapproving in young persons of fashion; even our princes have often practised it in imitation of the ancients, nor has it reflected any disgrace upon them; men of honor may engage in the profession as they did in Greece; *Aristoni tragico actori rem aperit; huic & genus & fortuna honesta erant; nec ars, quia nihil tale apud Græcos pudori est, ea deformabat.* I have always thought them ridiculous who condemned such innocent amusements; and those very unjust who will not permit comedians to come into our cities. Good policy always endeavors to bring people together, as well for sports and exercise, as for the most serious acts of devotion; it increases friendship and society, and it is certainly right that all pastimes should be carried on in public, and in the view of the magistrates. The prince, I think, should sometimes gratify the people at his own expense; and it would be very proper that, in populous cities, some particular places should be set apart for public spectacles, which might serve to divert the vulgar from worse employments. To return to my purpose; there is nothing like alluring

the passions and affections, otherwise we only make asses loaded with books; knowledge, to be agreeable, should not only lodge with, but should be married to us."

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## ON COURTIERS WHO HAVE CULTIVATED LEARNING.

THERE was a time when the arts were cultivated in France by persons of the first distinction; even the courtiers applied themselves to the *belles-lettres,* in spite of that dissipation, that taste for trifles, and that passion for intrigue, which are the deities of this country. It appears to me, that at present, learning is not the reigning taste at court. Perhaps the passion of studying may one day return to us. The king has it in his power to do what he pleases with this nation. In England it is common to study, and learning is more in esteem there than with us. This advantage is a necessary consequence of their form of government. There are about eight hundred persons in London that have a right to speak in public, and to support the interest of the nation; about five or six thousand more pretend in their turns to the same happiness; all the rest erect themselves into judges of these, and everyone gives his thoughts in print on the public affairs. Thus the whole nation is under a kind of necessity of being instructed. Nothing is talked of but the Athenian and Roman governments. It is necessary, nevertheless, to read the authors who have treated of them. This study naturally leads to that of the *belles-lettres.*

In general men have the spirit or genius of their peculiar condition. Why have our magistrates, our physicians, and many of our ecclesiastics in general, more learning, taste, and judgment than are to be found among other professions? It is because their station requires the cultivation of the mind, as that of a merchant demands a knowledge of commerce.

It is not long since a very young English nobleman paid me a visit in Paris on his return from Italy: he had composed a poetical description of that country, as politely written as any of Lord Rochester's verses, or those of our Chalieux, our Sarasins, or our Chapelles. The translation I have made of them is so far from approaching the energy and lively humor of the original, that I am obliged sincerely to ask pardon of the author and those who understand English: however, as I have no other way of making Lord Harvey's verses known, take them in my language—

*Qu'ai-je donc vu dans l'Italie?*
*Orgueil, astuce; & pauvreté;*
*Grands complimens, peu de bonté,*
*Et beaucoup de cérémonie.*

*L'extravagante Comédie,*
*Que souvent l'Inquisition.*
*Veut qu'on nomme Religion,*
*Mais qu'ici nous nommons folie.*

*La nature en vain bienfaisante*
*Veut enrichir ces lieux charmans;*
*Des Prêtres la main désolante*
*Étouffe ses plus beaux présens.*

*Les Monsignor, soi disans grands,*
*Seuls dans leurs Palais magnifiques,*
*Y sont d'illustres fainéans,*
*Sans argent & sans domestiques.*

*Pour les petits, sans liberté,*
*Martyrs du joug qui les domine;*
*Ils ont fait vœu de pauvreté,*
*Priants Dieu par oisiveté,*
*Et toujours jeûnans par famine.*

*Ces beaux lieux du Pape bénis*
*Semblent habités par les Diables;*
*Et les habitans misérables*
*Sont damnés dans le Paradis.*

I am not of Lord Harvey's opinion. There are countries in Italy which are very unfortunate, because foreigners have for a long time been fighting for the government of them; but there are others where the people are neither so beggarly nor so foolish as he describes them.

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## THE EARL OF ROCHESTER AND MR. WALLER.

The earl of Rochester's reputation is universally known. M. de St. Évremond has taken great notice of him; but he has only made us acquainted with the celebrated Rochester as a man of pleasure and intrigue. I propose to distinguish him as the man of genius and the poet. Among other works that are fraught with that lively imagination which he alone possessed, he wrote some satires on the same subjects as our celebrated Despréaux. I know nothing more useful toward perfecting true taste, than comparing the works of great men who have exercised their talents on the same subject. Observe in what manner Despréaux speaks against human reason in his "Satire on Man":

Behold him of his boasted reason vain,
Drunk with the fumes of his distempered brain;
Of nature he the base, and corner-stone;
The Heaven of Heavens revolves for him alone;
Of all that breathes on earth the sovereign lord,
And who will dare to doubt that sovereign's word?
Why, faith, my friend, that doubt belongs to me,
This king of beasts, how many kings has he?

Observe likewise how very nearly Lord Rochester expresses himself on the same subject in his "Satire on Man"; but let the reader always remember that mine are free translations of the English poets, and that the curb of our versification and the delicate decorum of our language will never form an equivalent for the impetuous flow of the English style.

It is this very reason I despise;
This supernatural gift, that makes a mite
Think he's the image of the infinite;
Comparing this short life, void of all rest,
To the eternal and the ever blest.
This busy, puzzling stirrer up of doubt,
That frames deep mysteries, then finds them out,
Filling with frantic crowds of thinking fools,
These reverend bedlams, colleges, and schools;
Borne on whose wings, each heavy sot can pierce
The limits of the boundless universe;
. . . . . .

'Tis this exalted power whose business lies
In nonsense and impossibilities,
This made a whimsical philosopher
Before the spacious world his tub prefer;
And we have modern coxcombs who
Retire to think, because they've nought to do.
But thoughts are given for action's government;
Where action ceases; thought's impertinent.
Our sphere of action is life's happiness;
And he who thinks beyond is like an ass.

Be these ideas true or false, it is certain that they are expressed with that energy which constitutes the poet. I shall guard against examining them

as a philosopher, and not quit the pencil for the compass: my only end in this letter is to make known the genius of the English poets; and to this point I shall continue to adhere.

The celebrated Waller has been much talked of in France. La Fontaine, St. Évremond, and Bayle, have made his eulogium; but little more is known of him than his name. He had very near the same degree of reputation in London, that Voiture had in Paris; and I think he merited it more. Voiture lived at a time when the people were just bursting the bands of barbarism, and were yet in a state of ignorance. Everyone wanted genius, but none had it at that time. Witticisms were sought after instead of ideas: false stones are much easier found than diamonds.

Voiture, born with an easy but frivolous genius, was the first who made a figure in this dawn of the French literature. Had he come after those great men who have adorned the age of Louis XIV. he would have been under a necessity of possessing something more than mere wit. His compositions might do well enough to amuse a private family, but are by no means worthy of being transmitted to posterity. It is true, Boileau praises him; but it is only in his first satires, that is to say, before his taste was completely formed; he was then but young, and of an age when we form our opinions of men rather by the reputation they have acquired, than by their real merit. And besides, Boileau was often very unjust both in his praises and in his censures. He extolled Ségrais, whom nobody reads;

he censured Quinault, whom everyone repeats by heart; and he speaks not a syllable of La Fontaine.

Waller, though a better poet than Voiture, was yet short of perfection. His compositions, which are full of gallantry, breathe an air of easy gracefulness; but his negligence makes them often languid, and besides his pieces are extremely disfigured with false thoughts. The English understood not in his time the secret of writing with purity and correctness. His serious works are manly and vigorous, a circumstance no one would have looked for from the perusal of his other performances. His funeral panegyric on Oliver Cromwell, with all its faults, passes for a masterpiece. To understand this poem it is necessary to know that Cromwell died on the same day on which a prodigious storm happened. It begins in this manner:

We must resign; Heaven his great soul does claim
In storms as loud as his immortal fame.
His dying groans, his last breath shake our isle;
And trees uncut fall for his funeral pile.
About his palace their broad roots are tossed
Into the air; so Romulus was lost.
Now Rome in such a tempest missed her king,
And from obeying fell to worshipping.
On Oeta's top thus Hercules lay dead,
With ruined oaks and pines about him spread;
Those his vast fury from the mountain rent:
Our dying hero from the continent
Ravished whole towns, and forts from Spaniards reft,
As this last legacy to Britain left.
The ocean, which so long our hopes confined,
Could give no limits to his vaster mind:
Our bounds' enlargement was his latest toil;
Nor hath he left us prisoners to our isle.
Under the tropic is our language spoke,
And part of Flanders has received our yoke.
From civil broils he did us disengage;
Found nobler objects for our martial rage:

And with wise conduct to his country showed,
The ancient way of conquering abroad.
Ungrateful then, if we no tears allow
To him that gave us peace and empire too!
Princes that feared him, grieve, concerned to see,
No pitch of glory from the grave is free.
Nature herself took notice of his death,
And sighing swelled the seas with such a breath,
That to the remotest shores her billow rolled,
The approaching fate of their great ruler told.

It was on occasion of this panegyric on Cromwell that Waller made Charles II. that famous answer, recorded in Bayle's dictionary. The king, whom Waller, according to the old custom between kings and poets, had waited upon, in order to present him with a poem stuffed with praises, reproached him with having written a better for Oliver. Waller answered, "Sir, we poets succeed much better in fiction than in truth." This answer was not so sincere as that of the Dutch ambassador, who, on the same king's complaining that his nation had showed less respect for him than for Cromwell, made answer, "Ah! Sir, Cromwell was quite a very different sort of a man." There are courtiers even in England, and Waller was certainly one in the truest sense of the word; but I consider men, after their death, by their works only: all the rest is with me wholly buried in oblivion. I will only remark, that Waller, born in a court, with a fortune of three thousand pounds a year, had neither the silly pride nor the stupidity to abandon the talent with which nature had endowed him. The earls of Dorset and Buckingham, Lord Halifax, and many others, did not think they derogated from their high rank and quality in becoming excellent poets, and illustrious

writers. Their works certainly do them more honor than their titles. They have cultivated letters, as if the making of their fortunes had depended on their studies. They have, moreover, rendered the arts and sciences respectable in the eyes of the people, who in everything stand in need of being guided by the great, and who, notwithstanding, are less influenced by their example in England than in any other country in the universe.

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## PRIOR; THAT SINGULAR POEM CALLED "HUDIBRAS"; AND DEAN SWIFT.

When Prior first came over to France as ambassador-plenipotentiary from Queen Anne to settle the terms of peace granted to Louis XIV. and previous to the arrival of Lord Bolingbroke, who signed the treaty; when this peer, I say, first came to France, no one imagined him to be at once a statesman and a poet. France has since paid England in her own coin; for Cardinal Du Bois sent our des Touches to London, who passed as little for a poet in England, as Prior did in France. Prior, the plenipotentiary, was originally a waiter in a tavern; the earl of Dorset, who himself was an excellent poet, and besides loved his bottle, found him one day reading Horace on a bench in the tavern, just as Lord Ilay found his gardener's boy reading Newton. Ilay made his young gardener a great philosopher, and Dorset made a very pleasant poet of his waiter.

"*Alma,* or the History of the Soul," written by this poet, is the most natural history that has been given till now, of that being, so well perceived, and so little understood. The soul has her residence at first in the extremities of the body, in the feet and hands of children; from there she insensibly places herself in the centre of the body at the age of puberty; afterward she takes possession of the heart, where she produces sentiments of love, gallantry, and heroism. In a still riper age, she mounts upward to the head, where she reasons in the best manner she is able; till at last, in old age, she retires the Lord knows whither, like the sap of an old tree, which evaporates, and is at last wholly lost. Possibly this work may be rather too prolix; all pleasantry ought to be concise, and perhaps the serious kind would hardly be the worse for a small spice of this quality.

The same Prior has composed a small poem on the battle of Höchstädt. This is by no means comparable to his "History of the Soul"; the only good thing in it is his apostrophe to Boileau.

*Satyrique flatteur, toi qui pris tant de peine*
*Pour chanter que Louis n'a point passé le Rhin, etc.*

Pindar, that eagle, mounts the skies,
While virtue leads the noble way;
Too like a vulture Boileau flies,
Where sordid interest shows the way.
When once the poet's honour ceases,
From reason far his transports rove;
And Boileau for eight hundred pieces,
Makes Louis take the wall of Jove.

Our plenipotentiary concludes with a paraphrase, consisting of five hundred verses on these words

which are commonly ascribed to Solomon, "All is vanity." It would have been no difficult matter to have written five thousand on the same topic. But woe to him that says all he is able to say.

Queen Anne being dead, and a change happening in the ministry, the peace of which Prior had sketched the first outlines, became the detestation of the people; and the political bard had no other resource left him but an edition of his works, published by a subscription set on foot by those of his own party, after which he died like a philosopher, that is as every honest Englishman dies, or at least is thought to die.

I should be glad now to give you a slight idea of the poetical writings of the earl of Roscommon and Dorset; but I am sensible this would make a little volume, and, after all, I should be able to give you but a very imperfect idea of so many different pieces. Poetry is akin to music, which must be heard, to form any judgment of its excellence. Even when I attempt to translate some passages of these foreign poets, I can at best but give you a very imperfect notion of their harmony or numbers; and I find it utterly impossible to convey to you the smallest notion of their cadences.

But, above all, the English poem called "Hudibras" is what puzzles me most to make you at all acquainted with. It is a piece wholly in the comic or burlesque style, though the subject is of no less consequence than the civil wars of Cromwell. This cruel war, which has been the occasion of so many

tears, and which has caused such an ocean of blood to be shed, has notwithstanding, given birth to a poem, which I defy the gravest reader to peruse without laughing. There is something of this contrasted kind to be met with in our "Menippean Satire." The Romans would certainly never have thought of writing a burlesque poem on the civil wars of Cæsar and Pompey, or on the proscriptions of Antony and Augustus. Whence then comes it to pass, that the dreadful disasters occasioned in France by the League, and those in England between the king and parliament, have given rise to so much pleasantry? It is undoubtedly true that those fatal broils had actually something exceedingly ridiculous at bottom. The citizens of Paris, at the head of the Faction of the Sixteen, mingled abundance of folly and impertinence with the horrors of faction. The intrigues of the women, the legate, and the monks had a droll aspect, notwithstanding those numberless calamities of which they were the occasion. The theological disputes, and the fanaticism of the Puritans in England, were fruitful fields for ridicule; and this source of ridicule, well laid open, was capable of affording large scope for pleasantry, after these tragical horrors, under which it lay concealed, were once removed. Although the bull *Unigenitus* has been the occasion of much bloodshed, yet is not the little poem of *"Philotamus"* the less adapted to the subject; and the only reproach that can, with any justice, be made him is, that he is not so merry and diverting, and so diversified, as he ought to be, and that he does not intro-

duce in the course of the work, what he promises in the beginning.

The poem "Hudibras," which I am now mentioning to you, seems to be a mixture of the "Menippean Satire" with Don Quixote," with this double advantage, that it is written in verse, and that it is infinitely more witty. As for the "Menippean Satire," it cannot stand in competition with it, and is really but a very middling performance. But his superabundance of wit is what has made him inferior to "Don Quixote." Taste, pleasing simplicity, the art of narration, of properly disposing the different adventures, of checking the natural fertility of one's genius, are, in my humble opinion, infinitely superior to mere wit. Hence it is, that "Don Quixote" is read by all the nations of Europe, while "Hudibras" affords entertainment only for those of his own country.

The name of this extraordinary author is Butler; he was contemporary with Milton, and had an infinitely greater share of reputation than he, from the pleasantry and humor of his poem; whereas that of Milton is very dismal. Butler made the enemies of Charles II. the subject of universal ridicule, and had this for his sole recompense, that the king often did him the honor to quote his verses. The battles of the knight Hudibras were much better known than those of the angels and devils of Milton's "Paradise Lost." But the court of England treated the witty and diverting Butler as ill as the court above did the grave Milton, for both were in a starving condition, or very near it.

The hero of Butler's poem was no feigned personage, like the Don Quixote of Michael Cervantes; he was actually a knight-baronet, that had formerly been one of Cromwell's enthusiasts, in whose service he bore the office of a colonel. His name was Sir Samuel Luke. In order to understand the spirit of this poem, which is wholly singular in its kind, there will be a necessity of retrenching, at least three-fourths of the passages we want to translate; for Butler is an author who never thinks he has said enough. I have therefore reduced to about fourscore verses, the first four hundred in his work, to avoid a disgusting prolixity.

*Quand les profanes & les Saints*
*Dans l'Angleterre étaient aux prises,*
*Qu'on se battait pour des Églises,*
*Aussi fort que pour des Catins;*
*Lorsqu' Anglicans & Puritains*
*Faisaient une si rude guerre,*
*Et qu'au sortir du cabaret*
*Les orateurs de Nazareth*
*Allaient battre la caisse en chaire;*
*Que partout sans savoir pour quoi,*
*Au nom du Ciel, au nom du Roi,*
*Les gens d'armes couvraient la terre;*
*Alors Monsieur le Chevalier,*
*Longtems oisif ainsi qu' Achille,*
*Tout rempli d'une sainte bile,*
*Suivi de son grand écuyer,*
*S'échappa de son poulaillier,*
*Avec son sabre & l' Évangile,*
*Et s'avisa de guerroyer.*
*Sire Hudibras, cet homme rare,*
*Était, dit-on, rempli d'honneur,*
*Avait de l'esprit & du cœur,*
*Mais il en était fort avare.*
*D'ailleurs par un talent nouveau,*
*Il était tout propre au barreau,*
*Ainsi qu'à la guerre cruelle;*
*Grand sur les bancs, grand sur la selle,*

*Dans les camps & dans un bureau ;*
*Semblable à ces rats amphibies,*
*Qui paraissant avoir deux vies,*
*Son rats de campagne & rats d'eau.*
*Mais malgré sa grande éloquence,*
*Et son mérite & sa prudence,*
*Il passa chez quelques savants*
*Pour être un de ces instruments,*
*Dont les fripons avec adresse*
*Savent user sans dire mot*
*Et qu'ils tournent avec souplesse ;*
*Cet instrument s'appelle un sot.*
*Ce n'est pas qu'en Théologie,*
*En Logique, en Astrologie,*
*Il ne fût un Docteur subtil ;*
*En quatre il séparait un fil,*
*Disputant sans jamais se rendre,*
*Changeant de thèse tout-à-coup,*
*Toujours prêt à parler beaucoup,*
*Quand il fallait ne point s'étendre.*
*D'Hudibras la Religion*
*Était tout comme sa raison,*
*Vide de sens & fort profonde.*
*Le Puritanisme divin,*
*La meilleure secte du monde,*
*Et qui certes n'a rien d'humain ;*
*La vraie Église militante,*
*Qui prêche un pistolet en main,*
*Pour mieux convertir son prochain,*
*À grands coups de sabre argumente,*
*Qui promet les célestes biens*
*Par le gibet & par la corde,*
*Et damne sans miséricorde*
*Les péchés des autres Chrétiens,*
*Pour se mieux pardonner les siens ;*
*Secte qui toujours détruisante*
*Se détruit elle-même enfin :*
*Tel Samson de sa main puissante*
*Brisa le temple Philistin,*
*Mais il périt par sa vengeance,*
*Et lui-même il s'ensevelit,*
*Écrasé sous la chute immense*
*De ce temple qu'il démolit.*
*Au nez du Chevalier antique*
*Deux grandes moustaches pendaient,*
*À qui les Parques attachaient*
*Le destin de la République.*
*Il les garde soigneusement,*

*Et si jamais on les arrache,*
*C'est la chute du Parlement;*
*L'État entier en ce moment*
*Doit tomber avec sa moustache.*
*Ainsi Taliacotius*
*Grand Esculape d'Étrurie,*
*Répara tous les nez perdus*
*Par une nouvelle industrie:*
*Il vous prenait adroitement*
*Un morceau du cu d'un pauvre homme,*
*L'appliquait au nez proprement;*
*Enfin il arrivait qu'en somme,*
*Tout juste à la mort du prêteur*
*Tombait le nez de l'emprunteur,*
*Et souvent dans la même bière,*
*Par justice & par bon accord,*
*On remettait au gré du mort*
*Le nez auprès de son derrière.*
*Notre grand Héros d'Albion,*
*Grimpé dessus sa haridelle*
*Pour venger la Religion*
*Avait à l'arçon de sa selle,*
*Deux pistolets & du jambon.*
*C'était de tout tems sa manière;*
*Sachant que si sa talonière*
*Pique une moitié du cheval*
*L'autre moitié de l'animal*
*Ne resterait point en arrière.*
*Voilà donc Hudibras parti;*
*Que Dieu bénisse son voyage,*
*Ses argumens & son parti,*
*Sa barbe rousse & son courage.*

A man whose imagination was capable of containing a tenth part of the *vis comica,* true or false, that predominates through every part of this work. would still be extremely diverting; but at the same time he would do well to have a care how he attempts to translate "Hudibras"; for how is it possible to excite laughter in readers who are foreigners, by means of the follies of persons long since forgotten in the very nation where they were once so famous? Dante is now no longer read in Europe,

because his work is perpetually alluding to facts utterly unknown. The case is exactly the same with "Hudibras." Most of the ridicule in this work falls on the theology and divines of his own time. A commentary is therefore wanted to every line. Humor that stands in need of being explained from that moment ceases to be such; and it is very rare to find an explainer of the wit of others, who has any of his own.

This is one reason why it will never be possible for the ingenious Dr. Swift to be understood in France, though he has justly acquired the title of "the English Rabelais." He enjoys also the honor of the priesthood, while he laughs at the whole cloth. Rabelais, however, was in every respect superior to his age, though Swift is infinitely superior to Rabelais.

Our curate of Meudon, in his extravagant and unintelligible book, has diffused abundance of gayety, and a still greater quantity of impertinence. He was equally full of prolixity, order, and erudition. A good story, which fills two pages, is bought at the expense of whole volumes of nonsense. There are none but those of capricious taste, who pique themselves on understanding and relishing the whole of his performance. The rest of the nation laugh at the pleasantries of Rabelais, while they despise his work, and he passes with them for the chief of buffoons. People are sorry that a man with so much wit should make such a low use of it. In short, it is a drunken philosopher, who wrote only when he was unable to stand.

Dr. Swift is Rabelais in his right senses, but polished by frequenting the best company. It is true he has not the gayety of the former, but he is possessed of all that delicacy, judgment, proper choice of matter, and that exquisite taste which is wholly wanting in the curate of Meudon. His verses are of a singular caste, and almost utterly inimitable. True pleasantry is his talent in prose and verse; but to understand him fully it is necessary to take a short trip into his country.

In this country, which appears so extraordinary to the rest of mankind, nobody was much surprised to see the reverend Dr. Swift, dean of a cathedral, laughing in his "Tale of a Tub" at Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists. He alleges in his own vindication, that he left Christianity untouched. He pretends to have shown all manner of respect to the father, by giving a hearty drubbing to each of the three sons. Nice people will be apt to find this apology rather too slight for what passes with them for a flagrant enormity.

This famous "Tale of a Tub" is an imitation of the ancient tale of the "Three Invisible Rings," which a certain father bequeathed to his three children. These three rings were the Jewish, the Christian, and the Mahometan religions. It is likewise an imitation of the "History of Mero and Enegu," by Fontenelle. Mero was the anagram of Rome, and Enegu that of Geneva. These were two sisters, who pretended each to have the right of succession to the kingdom of their father. Mero was the first that mounted the throne. Fontenelle repre-

sents her as a sorceress, who was wont to steal bread, and who performed her enchantments by the help of dead bodies. She is exactly Lord Peter in Swift, while he is presenting a piece of bread to his two brothers, and tells them, "Friends, here is some excellent Burgundy, this partridge has a most exquisite flavor." The same Lord Peter plays everywhere the part of Mero in Fontenelle.

Thus almost every composition is no more than an imitation. The hint of the "Persian Letters" is taken from the "Turkish Spy." Boiardo has imitated Pulci, as Ariosto has imitated Boiardo. The most original geniuses borrow from each other. Michael Cervantes makes his Don Quixote a fool; but pray is Orlando any other? It would puzzle one to decide whether knight-errantry has been made more ridiculous by the grotesque painting of Cervantes, than by the luxuriant imagination of Ariosto. Metastasio has taken the greater part of his operas from our French tragedies. Several English writers have copied us, without saying one word of the matter. It is with books, as it is with the fires in our houses; one goes and lights his candle at his neighbor's, and then lights one of his own; whence he communicates to his neighbors that want his assistance, so that it becomes absolutely the property of every one.

## ON POPE.

I FANCY it will be more easy for you to form some idea of Mr. Pope. He is in my opinion the most elegant, the most correct, and, what is still more difficult to find, the most harmonious poet that England has hitherto produced. He has reduced the shrill harshness of the English trumpet to the soft sweetness of the Lydian flute. His "Essay on Criticism" will soon be sufficiently known in France, by the translations in verse which Abbé du Renel is about to publish.

What follows is a passage from his poem called the "Rape of the Lock," which I have lately translated with my usual liberty; for I must again repeat that I know nothing so execrable as a literal translation of a piece of poetry.

*Umbriel à l'instant, vieux Gnome rechigné,*
*Va, d'une aile pesante, & d'un air renfrogné,*
*Chercher en murmurant la caverne profonde,*
*Où loin des doux rayons, que répand l'œil du monde,*
*La Déesse aux vapeurs a choisi son séjour:*
*Les tristes Aquilons y sifflent à l'entour,*
*Et le souffle malsain de leur aride haleine*
*Y porte aux environs la fièvre & la migraine.*
*Sur un riche sopha, derrière un paravent,*
*Loin des flambeaux, du bruit, des parleurs & du vent,*
*La quinteuse Déesse incessamment repose,*
*Le cœur gros de chagrin, sans en savoir la cause,*
*N'ayant pensé jamais, l'esprit toujours troublé,*
*L'œil chargé, le teint pâle, & l'hypocondre enflé.*
*La médisante Envie est assise auprès d'elle,*
*Vieux spectre feminin, décrépite pucelle,*
*Avec un air dévot déchirant son prochain,*
*Et chansonnant les gens, l'Évangile à la main.*
*Sur un lit plein de fleurs, négligemment panchée,*
*Une jeune beauté non loin d'elle est couchée;*
*C'est l'affectation, qui grasseye en parlant,*
*Écoute sans entendre, & lorgne en regardant:*

*Qui rougit sans pudeur, & rit de tout sans joie,*
*De cent maux différens prétend qu'elle est la proie,*
*Et pleine de santé sous le rouge & le fard,*
*Se plaint avec mollesse, & se pâme avec art.*

Umbriel, a dusky melancholy sprite,
As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repairs to search the gloomy cave of spleen.

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the gnome,
And in a vapor reached the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded east is all the wind that blows;
Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air,
And screened in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.

Two handmaids wait the throne, alike in place,
But differing far in figure and in face:
Here stood Ill-Nature, like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed;
With store of prayers, for mornings, nights, and noons,
Her hand is filled; her bosom with lampoons.
There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen.
Practised to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride;
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe;
Wrapt in a gown, for sickness and for show.

Pope's "Essay on Man" is in my opinion the finest, the most useful, and the sublimest didactic poem that has ever been written in any language. The groundwork of the whole, it is true, may be found in Lord Shaftesbury's "Characteristics," for which reason I cannot see why Mr. Pope has given all the honor of it to Lord Bolingbroke, without mentioning a word of the famous Shaftesbury, the disciple of Locke.

As there is nothing in metaphysics but what has been often thought in every age and nation where the talents of the mind are cultivated, this

system has a great conformity with that of Leibnitz; who pretends, that, of all possible worlds, God must certainly have chosen the best; and that, even in this best, all the irregularities of our globe, as well as the follies of its inhabitants, should have a place. It has also a resemblance to the notion of Plato, which says, that, in the infinite chain of beings, our earth, our bodies, and our souls, are so many necessary links. But neither Leibnitz nor Pope admits of those changes, which, according to Plato, have happened to those links of it, our souls and bodies. Plato, in his unintelligible prose, wrote like a poet; while Pope, in his admirable version, is truly a great philosopher. He says, all things have at all times been, even from the very infancy of nature, as they are; that is, as they should be: "Whatever is, is best." I could not help being pleased, I own, to find he agreed with me in a point which I had maintained several years since.

"You are filled with wonder to think God should have made man with faculties so limited, so ignorant, and so much short of true happiness. Why do not you rather wonder he did not make him infinitely more so?" When a Frenchman and an Englishman happen to agree in any point, you may swear they are then in the right.

The son of the famous Racine has published a letter of Pope addressed to him, with a recantation of this doctrine. This letter is written in the style and manner of Fénelon; it was delivered him by Ramsay, the editor of "Telemachus"; that Ramsay, who was the imitator of "Telemachus," and much

such another as Boyer was of Corneille; that Scotch Ramsay who modestly demanded admittance into the French Academy; in a word, by that Ramsay who was sadly disappointed at not being a doctor of the Sorbonne. This I know, as does every man of letters in England, that Pope, with whom I was very intimately acquainted, could hardly read French; spoke not one word of our language; never wrote one single syllable in the language, not being capable; and, if he ever wrote such a letter to the son of our Racine, God must certainly have endowed him with the gift of tongues, by way of recompense for having composed so wonderful a work as his "Essay on Man."

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## THE ROYAL SOCIETY AND ACADEMIES.

All great men have either been formed before the institution of academies, or at least without any assistance from them. Homer and Phidias, Sophocles and Apelles, Virgil and Vitruvius, Ariosto and Michelangelo, belonged to no academy; Tasso met with no other advantages besides a few ill-grounded criticisms from that of La Crusca; nor was Newton indebted to the Royal Society of London for his discoveries in optics, gravitation, the doctrine of integrals, and chronology. Of what use then are academies? To keep alive that flame which great geniuses have kindled.

The Royal Society of London was formed in 1660, six years before our Academy of Sciences.

This society bestows no premiums or rewards, as ours does; but then to make amends every member is perfectly at liberty; there are none of those disagreeable distinctions, invented by the abbé Bignon, who divided the Academy of Sciences into literary members who had salaries, and mere honoraries who had no pretensions to learning. The Society of London, wholly independent of, and unengaged by any but themselves, was composed of persons who, as I have already observed, discovered the series of infinities, the laws of light and colors, those of gravity, the aberration of the fixed stars, the reflecting telescope, the fire-engine, the solar microscope, with many other inventions equally useful and astonishing. What more could those great men have done for the public utility, had they been either pensioners or honoraries?

The famous Dr. Swift, in the latter part of Queen Anne's reign, formed the design of establishing an academy for the English language on the model of the French Academy. This project was supported by the earl of Oxford, then at the head of the treasury, and still more by Lord Bolingbroke, who possessed the talent of speaking extempore in parliament with all that purity with which Swift wrote in his closet, and who would have been at once the patron and the ornament of this academy. The members who were to have composed it were persons whose writings will last as long as the English language; namely, Dr. Swift; Mr. Prior, whom we have seen at our court, in a public character, and who is held in the same reputation in England as

La Fontaine in France; Mr. Pope, the English Boileau; Mr. Congreve, who may be justly styled their Molière,[1] with several others whose names I cannot well remember; all of whom could not have failed to have rendered this body illustrious in its very infancy. But the queen unfortunately happening to die suddenly, the Whigs took it into their heads to bring the protectors of these, if possible, to the block or gallows; a mortal blow, as you may well imagine, to the *belles-lettres.* The members who were to have composed this academy would have had a prodigious advantage over the founders of ours. Swift, Prior, Congreve, Dryden, Pope, Addison, etc., had fixed the English language by their writings; whereas Chapelain, Colletet, Cassaigne, Faret, Cotin, our first academicians, were the scandal of our nation, and their names so ridiculous, that at this day, should any author have the misfortune to be called Chapelain or Cotin, he would be under the necessity of changing his name.

Besides, the English academy would have adopted a very different plan of operation from that of ours. One day one of the wits of that country asked me to show him some of the memoirs of the French Academy. I told him they had not written any memoirs, but they had printed about four-score volumes of compliments. He glanced over one or two of them. He could by no means comprehend a single syllable of what they meant, though he very

[1] Never did any two authors write on the same subjects so differently as did Molière and Congreve. Molière distinguished himself by his natural simplicity, and Congreve by his unnatural wit.

well understood all our good authors. "All I can discover," said he, "by this multitude of fine speeches, is, that after the new candidate has told them that his predecessor was a very great man, that Cardinal Richelieu was an exceedingly great man, and Chancellor Séguier a very eminent man; the director answered him in the same manner that echoed back the same expressions; adding that the candidate might possibly be a great man; and as for himself, the director, he did not mean by all this to forfeit his title to be one among the rest." It is easy to discover by what kind of fatality almost all those academical discourses have done this body so little honor. *Vitium est temporis potius quam hominis.* The custom has been established insensibly, that every academician should repeat those eulogiums at his reception; this was no more than to make it a kind of law to tire the patience of the public. Should we afterwards inquire, how it came to pass, that the greatest geniuses who have entered into this society have sometimes made the worst harangues, the reason is very evident; it is, that they wanted to shine by treating a threadbare subject in a manner different from all who had gone before them. The necessity of saying something, when one has not a syllable to say; the plague of mixing something new in a subject already exhausted; and withal, that passion of showing one's talents, are enough to make the greatest wit appear truly ridiculous. Not being able to find anything but what has been said before, they rack their brains to give the old thoughts new clothing, by forced

turns of expression, and have been compelled to speak without thinking; like people who act as if they were eating, while they are ready to perish with hunger. Instead of the law whereby the French Academy have bound themselves to print all their discourses, which are, properly speaking, the whole of their works, methinks they had done better, had they made it a law to print none of them at all.

The academy of *belles-lettres* have proposed a wiser and more advantageous end, which is that of presenting the public with a collection of memoirs, filled with researches and ingenious criticisms. Those memoirs are already in esteem among foreigners; only one would wish they had dipped somewhat deeper in certain subjects, and that they had entirely passed by some others without notice. We could have very well dispensed, for instance, with such disquisitions as the origin of the preference due to the right hand over the left, with some other researches, which, though with titles not quite so ridiculous, are not less frivolous. The Academy of Sciences, in her more difficult, but more evidently useful, inquiries, is wholly employed in the study of nature, and the perfecting of the arts. It is to be believed that studies, which are at once so profound and so closely pursued, calculations so exact, discoveries so nice and ingenious, and views so extensive, will one day produce something that may be greatly to the advantage of mankind.

The most useful discoveries have been made in the most barbarous ages; and it seems to be the lot of the most enlightened periods, and of the most

learned bodies, to reason about the inventions of the ignorant. We may know, after the long disputes of Mr. Huyghens and Mr. Renaud, the determination of the most advantageous angle of the rudder of a ship with her keel; but Christopher Columbus had discovered America without so much as dreaming of any such angle. I am far from inferring from this that we ought to confine ourselves wholly to the uncertainty of blind practice; but it would be a happiness if natural philosophers and geometricians would, as much as possible, join the practical part to the theory. Is it absolutely necessary, that what does the most honor to the human mind should often be the least useful. A man who is possessed of the four common rules of arithmetic, with a natural stock of good sense, becomes an eminent merchant, a James Cœur, a Delmet, or a Bernard; while a poor algebraist passes his days in discovering wonderful relations and astonishing properties in numbers, but of no manner of use, and which would never have let him into the common course of exchange. All the arts are pretty much the same. There is a certain point, beyond which all is matter of mere curiosity. These ingenious but useful truths are like the stars, which are placed at such an infinite distance from us that we reap not the least advantage from their beams.

As for the French Academy, what advantage might they not afford to learning, to the language, and to the nation, if, instead of pestering the world every year with a magazine of fulsome compliments, they had published the good authors of the age of

Louis XIV., purged from all those faults in language which have crept into them? Corneille and Molière are quite full of them. Fontaine swarms with such mistakes. Those at least might be pointed out that appear incapable of being mended. Europe, which reads our authors, might in them learn our language safe from all danger of a vicious idiom. Its purity would then be fixed forever. The best French authors, carefully published at the king's expense, would be one of the most glorious monuments of the nation. I have heard that Boileau formerly made a proposal of this kind; and that it has been since renewed by one whose wit and good sense, as well as sound criticism, are well known; but with the common fate of many other useful projects, that of being approved and neglected.

It is very extraordinary that Corneille, who composed the first of his good tragedies at a time when the language was only beginning to be formed, should have written them with tolerable purity and great sublimity, and all the rest in a loose, incorrect, and even low style, though Racine had then bestowed on the French language so much purity, so much sublimity and grace; and while Boileau fixed it by the most exact corrections, precision, strength, fullness, energy, and harmony. Let any one but compare the "*Bérénice*" of Racine with that of Corneille, and he would imagine this latter to have been written in the age of Tristan. It would make one believe that Corneille neglected his style in proportion as he was under a greater necessity to support it, and that his sole emulation was to write,

when it should have been to write well. His last twelve or thirteen tragedies are not only wretched, but in a very mean style. What is still more surprising is, that, even in our own days, we have had plays, with other performances both in prose and verse, composed by academicians, who have neglected their language to such a degree that one can hardly read ten verses in them without meeting with some barbarism. We may overlook a few faults in a good author; but where they grow numerous, it is impossible for such a work to support the writer's reputation. A company of persons of good taste one day counted more than six hundred intolerable solecisms in a tragedy which had met with distinguished applause both in Paris and at court. Two or three instances of such unmerited success would be sufficient to corrupt the language past all possibility of recovery, and to plunge it into its ancient barbarism, from whence it has been drawn by the assiduous labors of so many great men.

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## ON CROMWELL.

Cromwell is commonly represented as one who was an impostor through the whole course of his life. This is what I can hardly believe. My opinion of the matter is, that he was first of all an enthusiast, but that afterwards he made his very fanaticism subservient to his greatness. A novice possessed of extreme religious fervor at twenty often becomes a consummate knave at forty. In the great game of

human life, men begin by being dupes, but end knaves. A statesman may sometimes take for his chaplain a monk covered over with the little pedantry of his convent; fanatic, devout, credulous, awkward, and quite raw in the world, the monk acquires knowledge, politeness, learns to intrigue, till at last he supplants his patron.

Cromwell at first hardly knew what to make of himself, and was puzzled whether to be a churchman or a soldier. He was actually both. He made a campaign with Frederick Henry, prince of Orange, in 1622, who was not only a man of great capacity himself, but also brother of two illustrious personages. When he returned to England, he entered into the service of Bishop Williams, and was my lord's chaplain, while my lord was thought to be rather too great with his wife. His religious principles were those of the Puritanical sect; so that he could not but mortally hate the bishop, nor could he have any great affection for kings. He was banished from the bishop's family on account of his being a Puritan, and this accident was properly the fountain and first beginning of all his grandeur.[1] The English Parliament had declared against royalty and episcopacy, when some friends Cromwell had in that parliament had him chosen for a borough. He may

[1] We know not where our author picked up these anecdotes; but we will venture to say they are not true. Cromwell had been a libertine in his youth; but he all at once became a fanatic, and was so engrossed by his exercises of devotion that he neglected his temporal affairs, which were in great disorder when he was returned member of parliament for the town of Cambridge. He had attained his fortieth year before he embraced the military profession, and then the civil war had broken out.

be said to have existed only from this time, and was turned of forty before he made any noise in the world. In vain had he studied the Bible, learned to wrangle about the institution of priests and deacons, and made some wretched sermons and libels; he was still in obscurity. I have seen a sermon of his, pretty much like one of the Quaker's harangues, in which one cannot discover the smallest traces of that persuasive eloquence[1] by which he afterwards swayed the parliaments. The true reason of this is, that he was much better qualified for the State than the Church. But his eloquence consisted wholly in his air and in the tone of his voice; the single motion of that hand that won so many battles and killed so many royalists was more persuasive than all the studied periods of Cicero. It must also be acknowledged that the reputation he acquired was wholly owing to his incomparable valor, which laid the first steps of that ladder by which he reached the highest summit of human grandeur.

He began by serving as a volunteer desirous of making his fortune, in the city of Hull,[2] which was then besieged by the king. Here he performed so many gallant and successful exploits that he was rewarded by the parliament with a gratuity of about six thousand livres of our money. Such a present,

[1] He never possessed the least talent for eloquence; on the contrary, his public harangues were insipid, perplexed, and often unintelligible.

[2] He was not in the town of Hull, which was never besieged, though Sir John Hotham refused to surrender it to the king. The first specimen of Cromwell's soldiership was his raising a troop of horse for the service of the parliament, and quartering them at Cambridge.

bestowed by the parliament on a simple volunteer, was a sure prognostic that their party must one day get the better. The king was not then in a position to make such a present to his general officers as the parliament gave on this occasion to their volunteers. With money and fanaticism, they must, in the long run, overcome all that stood in their way; they made Cromwell a colonel; then it was that his great talents for war began to display themselves; insomuch that, when the parliament made the earl of Manchester their general, they made Cromwell a lieutenant-general, without passing through the intermediate ranks. Never did man seem more worthy of command; never was there seen a greater share of prudence and activity, or a more daring and undaunted spirit, joined to such an infinity of resources as were in Cromwell. He was wounded in the battle of York; and while the surgeons were preparing to dress his wounds, he was told that his general, Lord Manchester, was retreating, and that the battle was entirely lost. He ran to Lord Manchester, whom he found flying, with some of his officers; he immediately took him by the arm; and, with an air of intrepidity and greatness, said: "You are mistaken, my lord; this is not the way the enemy have fled." He led him back near to the spot on which the battle was fought; rallied in the night more than twelve thousand men; exhorted them in the name of the Lord; cited the examples of Moses, Gideon, and Joshua; beseeched them by all means not to neglect to engage the victorious royalists at break of day; and entirely defeated them. Almost

all the officers in his army were enthusiasts, who carried their Bibles tied to the pommels of their saddles; there was nothing talked of, either in the army or in parliament, but the overthrowing of Babylon, the establishment of the Lord's worship in the New Jerusalem, and the breaking of the great idol. Cromwell, though amidst a host of fools, grew wise at last, and bethought himself that it was better to guide them than to be governed by them. The habit, however, of preaching like one inspired still remained with him. Imagine to yourself a Fakir, with his loins bound about with a girdle of iron out of mere mortification, who afterwards pulls off his girdle, and falls to knocking down his brother Fakirs. This is Cromwell; he became fully as good a politician as he was a soldier; he entered into an association with all the colonels of the army; and thus he formed his soldiers into a kind of republic, who forced their general to abdicate. Another generalissimo was named, with whom he was soon dissatisfied; he governed the army, and with them the parliament, whom he at last compelled to create him generalissimo. All this is certainly a great deal; but what is more remarkable is that he gained every battle he fought, whether in Scotland, England, or Ireland; and gained them not like other generals, by being a mere spectator, solicitous about his own safety, but by continually charging the enemy in person; rallying his troops; by being present everywhere; often wounded; killing several of the royalists with his own hand; like some furious grenadier, that delights in carnage.

In the midst of this cruel and bloody war, Cromwell was making love, and went with his Bible under his arm to lie with the wife of his major-general, Lambert. This lady was in love with the earl of Holland, who was then serving in the royal army. Cromwell took him prisoner in one of his battles, and had the pleasure of cutting off his rival's head. His maxim was to cut off every enemy of any consequence, either in the field of battle, or by the hand of the executioner. He increased his power on every occasion by perpetually abusing it; and the depth of his designs lack nothing of his natural ferocity. He entered the parliament; and taking out his watch, throws it on the ground and breaks it to pieces, with this expression: "I will break you, just as I have done that watch." Some time after he returned, and dissolved them by his own authority, making them file off, as it were in review, before him. Each member was obliged, as he passed him, to make him a profound bow. One of them, it seems, thought proper to pass him with his hat on; when Cromwell, taking it off, threw it on the ground. "Learn," said he, "to show me the proper respect."

After having insulted every crowned head, by cutting off that of the king, his lawful sovereign, and when he had even begun his own reign, he sent his picture to Queen Christina of Sweden. Marvel, a famous English poet, who made very good Latin verses, composed six lines on the occasion, which were to accompany that present, in which he introduced Cromwell himself. Cromwell corrected the last two, which are these:

*At tibi submittit frontem reverentior umbra,*
*Non sunt hi vultus regibus usque truces.*

The bold sentiment expressed in those three couplets may be turned in this manner:

*Les armes à la main j'ai défendu les lois;*
*D'un peuple audacieux j'ai vengé la querelle.*
*Regardez sans frémir cette image fidèle;*
*Mon front n'est pas toujours l'épouvante des rois.*

Behold the chief who fought for dying laws,
And shunned no dangers in his country's cause;
To kings no longer dreadful, sues to you;
And smooths the terrors of his awful brow.

This queen was the first who acknowledged him on his being made protector of the three kingdoms. Almost every sovereign in Europe sent ambassadors to their brother Cromwell, to this once menial servant of a bishop, who had put his sovereign, who was of their blood, to death by the hands of the executioner; nay, they disputed who should have the honor of being in alliance with him. Cardinal Mazarin, to please him, banished the two sons of Charles I., the two grandsons of Henry IV., the two cousins-german of Louis XIV. of France, conquered Dunkirk for him, and the keys of that place were accordingly sent him. When he died, Louis XIV., with his whole court, put on mourning, except Mademoiselle, who had the courage to come to the circle in colors, thus singly maintaining the honor of her family.

Never was there king more absolute than Cromwell. He said he liked better to govern under the quality of protector than that of king, because the power of the latter was well known to the people of England, whereas that of a protector was not.

This showed a thorough knowledge of mankind, who are slaves to opinion, which opinion often depends on a mere name. He had conceived a thorough contempt for religion, though he was indebted to it for all the power and honors he enjoyed. We have an undeniable anecdote of this preserved in the St. John family, which is a sufficient proof of the sovereign contempt Cromwell entertained for that instrument which had produced such wonderful effects in his hands. He was one day cracking a bottle with Ireton, Fleetwood, and St. John,[1] who was grandfather of the present Lord Bolingbroke; they wanted to draw the cork of a bottle, when the corkscrew happened to fall under the table; they were all of them in search of it, but could not find it. In the meantime word was brought in that a deputation from the Presbyterian churches waited for an audience in the antechamber. "Tell them," said Cromwell, "that I am *in private seeking the Lord.*" This was the canting expression of those fanatics for being at prayers. When he had in this manner dismissed the deputation of ministers, he made use of these very words to his companions: "Those knaves think we are seeking the Lord, whereas in truth we are looking for the corkscrew."

Europe has no example of any man who raised himself to such a height of glory, from so humble an original. What could such a man want? Success. This success he enjoyed; but was he happy with all his good fortune? He lived in very narrow

[1] The St. John here mentioned was no more than a natural son of Lord Bolingbroke's family, and a lawyer by profession.

and uneasy circumstances till past forty; he then bathed himself in blood, passed the rest of his days in perpetual anxieties, and died at last in his fifty-seventh year. Let any man but compare the life of this man with that of Newton, who lived four-score and four years, in perfect tranquillity, full of honor, the light and guide of all intelligent beings, his reputation and fortune daily increasing, without care or remorse; and then tell me whose was the happier lot of the two.

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## THE MISFORTUNES OF CHARLES I.

The Irish massacre has not the same degree of celebrity in the history of great crimes as that of St. Bartholomew, though it was as general, and accompanied with all the horrors and barbarities that could distinguish such an outburst of enthusiastic fury. But this conspiracy of one half of a nation against the other, on account of religion, passed in an island at that time little known by other nations, and had not the authority of such illustrious accomplices as a queen regent, a king of France, and a duke of Guise; the victims of this brutal zeal, though equal in number, were not of such consideration as those in France, and although the scene was fully as bloody, yet the theatre of action did not fix the attention of Europe. The whole world still rings with the horrors of St. Bartholomew's day, while the Irish massacre is in a manner forgotten.

If we were to reckon the murders which have been committed by enthusiasm since the days of St.

Athanasius and of Arius to the present time, we should find that those disputes have contributed more to the depopulation of the earth than all the battles that have been fought; for in these the male species only is destroyed, which is always more numerous than the female; but in the massacres perpetrated for religion's sake both sexes are indiscriminately made the victims.

Reflections on the declaration of Charles I. concerning religion show that in religious matters princes are more under subjection to their people than the people to them. When once what we call dogma, or an opinion, has got root in a nation, the sovereign must declare that he is ready to die in the defence of that opinion. It is much easier to make such a speech than to persuade a headstrong populace.

Of the numberless dissensions which have at different times threatened the subversion of the English government before it acquired the happy and settled form in which we now see it, the troubles of those times preceding the death of Charles I. were the only ones in which excess of folly and excess of madness were joined together, and that ridiculous superstition with which the reformed sect had reproached those of the Romish communion, might now be retorted upon the Puritans. The bishops behaved like mean-spirited cowards; they should have died in defence of a cause which they thought just; but the behavior of the Presbyterians was that of madmen; their dress, their way of discoursing, their low allusions to passages of Scripture,

their ridiculous gestures, their sermons, their pretended prophecies; in short, the whole of their manners might in peaceable times have served to divert the mob at a fair, had they not been rather too disgusting. But, unhappily, these fanatics joined fury to absurdity; and those whom children nowadays would laugh to scorn, by wading through rivers of blood, made themselves respected and dreaded; and were at once the most ridiculous and the most formidable of men.

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## OLIVER CROMWELL.

The marquis of Montrose was sentenced to be hanged on a gibbet thirty feet high, to be afterward quartered, and his members fixed upon the gates of the four principal towns in Scotland, for having offended against the New Law or Covenant, as it was called. This brave nobleman, on hearing his sentence pronounced by the judge, made answer that he was sorry he had not quarters enough to be sent to the gates of every town in Europe, as monuments of his fidelity to his prince. He even put this sentiment into tolerable verse as he was going to the place of execution. He was a person of the most agreeable wit, and the most learning, as well as the bravest man of any in the three kingdoms. The Presbyterian clergy accompanied him to his execution, reviling and insulting him and pronouncing his damnation.

Oliver Cromwell placed confidence only in the independents, who could not exist except through him, and he would laugh at them sometimes with the

deists, though he did not look on deism with a favorable eye, as being a religion void of enthusiasm, and consequently fit only for philosophers, and never of service to conquerors.

There were but a few of this philosophic sect in the kingdom, and with these he would sometimes divert himself at the expense of the holy madmen, who had cleared the way for him to the throne with the Bible in their hands. By this conduct he preserved, to his last hour, an authority which had been cemented with blood, and supported by force and artifice.

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## ENGLAND UNDER CHARLES II.

Deism, which Charles II. seemed openly to profess, became the reigning religion among the many others then in the kingdom, and has since made surprising progress in other parts of the world. The earl of Shaftesbury, son of the minister, and one of the chief supporters of this sect, says positively in his "Characteristics," that the noble appellation of deist cannot be too highly reverenced. A number of eminent writers have made open profession of deism; and the major part of the Socinians have ranged themselves under its standard. This sect, now very numerous, is accused of admitting only the light of reason and rejecting all revelation. It is not possible for a Christian to stand up as their advocate; but the strict impartiality with which we are desirous to draw this great picture of human life obliges us, while we condemn their doctrine, to do

justice to their behavior. We cannot therefore but acknowledge that this is the only sect of all others that has not disturbed the peace of society by its disputes; and, though erroneous, has been always clear of fanaticism. It is indeed impossible that such a sect should be other than peaceable, since its followers are united with all mankind in the principle common to all ages and all countries; namely, the worship of one only God; and differ from other men only in having neither forms nor places of worship, in believing only in one just God, allowing for the diversity of opinions in others, and seldom disclosing their own. They say that their pure religion, which is as old as the world, was for a long time the only true one, before God Himself gave another to the Hebrew nation. They found this notion from its having been always the religion of the Chinese literati; but these literati had a public form of worship, whereas the European deists have only a private one, every person worshipping God in his own house, and assisting without scruple at all public ceremonies; at least there have hitherto been but a very inconsiderable number of those called Unitarians, who have formed an assembly; and these may be called primitive Christians rather than deists.

Notwithstanding the great change in minds and affairs in England, the love of liberty and faction did not change among the people, nor that passion for absolute power which prevailed in the king and his brother, the duke of York; so that in the midst of the pleasures and festivities of a court, confusion,

division, and animosities between sects and parties overspread the kingdom. There were not indeed any violent civil wars, as in the time of Cromwell; but numberless intrigues, plots, and murders, committed under the solemn mask of justice, and in virtue of laws which hatred or party misapprehension construed according to their own purpose, threw a cloud over a great part of the reign of Charles II. This prince indeed seemed, by the amiable mildness of his character, formed to render his people as happy as he made every one who had the honor of approaching him; and yet the blood of the subject flowed under the hand of the executioner during this good prince's reign, as well as under those of others. Religion was the sole cause of these disasters, notwithstanding that Charles himself was perfectly indifferent on that head.

Charles had no children, and his brother, who was heir presumptive to the crown, had lately turned Papist, a name which is held in execration by the parliament and kingdom of England in general. As soon as it was positively known that the duke had changed his religion, the fear of having one day a Papist for their king made a change in almost all minds. Some wretches among the dregs of the people hired by the faction that opposed the court, pretended to discover a plot much more extraordinary than that known as the Gunpowder Plot. They declared, and swore to it, that the Papists had formed a design to murder the king and place the crown upon his brother's head; that Pope Clement X., in a congregation called "*de Propaganda,*" held

in 1675, had declared that the kingdom of England belonged to the popes by an imprescriptible right; that, in virtue of this right, he had appointed Oliva, general of the Jesuit order, his lieutenant there; and that this Jesuit had made over his authority to the duke of York, the pope's vassal; that an army was to be raised in England to drive Charles II. from the throne; that Father La Chaise, a Jesuit and confessor to Louis XIV., had remitted a thousand louis d'or to London to set the operations on foot; that Conyers, another Jesuit, had bought a poniard which cost him twenty shillings, with which he was to stab the king; and that a certain physician had been offered ten thousand pounds to poison him. At the same time they produced a list of the names and commissions of all the officers who had been nominated by the general of the Jesuits to command the army to be raised in defence of popery.

Never was accusation more absurd. The rabbet woman, or the bottle-conjurer in England, or with us the affair of the bull *Unigenitus,* the convulsionists, and the charges brought against philosophers and men of learning, were not more ridiculous. But when once the minds of men come to be heated, the more preposterous an opinion is, the more it is credited.

The whole nation took the alarm. The parliament, in spite of all the endeavors of the court, proceeded in the most severe manner. There was some mixture of truth in these incredible falsehoods, and that was sufficient to sanctify the whole. The informers pretended that Oliva had appointed one

Coleman, a dependant on the duke of York, his secretary of state in England. This Coleman's papers were seized, and some letters were found among them written by him to Father La Chaise, in which were the following expressions: "We have a great undertaking in hand, no less than the conversion of three kingdoms, and perhaps the total extirpation of heresy; we have a prince zealous in our cause, etc. You must send a large sum of money to the king, money is the only prevailing logic at our court."

It is plain by these letters that the Catholic party wanted to get the upper hand, that they placed great dependence on the duke of York, and that the king himself was inclined to favor the Catholics, provided they would supply him handsomely with money; and, lastly, that the Jesuits were doing all in their power to serve the pope in England. All the rest was manifestly false; and the informers contradicted themselves so grossly in their depositions that at any other time they would have been laughed at by every one.

But Coleman's letters, and the murder of a justice of peace, which happened about that time, made anything be believed of the Papists. Several persons who were accused lost their lives on the scaffold, and five Jesuits were hanged and quartered. Had these men been condemned as disturbers of the public peace, or for holding illicit correspondence, and endeavoring to subvert the religion by law established, their sentence would have been perfectly just; but certainly they should not have been put to death as captains or chaplains of

a popish army, which was to have conquered the three kingdoms. The zeal against popery, however, was carried so far that the house of commons almost unanimously passed the bill of exclusion against the duke of York, by which he was declared forever incapable of succeeding to the crown of England. This unhappy prince, a few years afterward, did but too well confirm this sentence of the house of commons.

England, all the northern kingdoms, one-half of Germany, the seven United Provinces, and one-fourth of the Swiss cantons, had hitherto contented themselves with considering the Roman Catholic religion as idolatrous. But this obloquy had not passed into a law in any of these states. Now, however, the English parliament tacked the oath of abjuration to that of the test, and obliged the people to swear to their abhorrence of popery as an idolatrous religion.

What changes have happened in the human mind! The first Christians accused the Roman senate with paying divine honors to statues, which they certainly did not. The Christian religion continued three hundred years without images; twelve Christian emperors treated as idolaters those who prayed before the pictures or figures of saints. This mode of worship was afterward received by the Eastern and Western churches, and after that held in abhorrence by one-half of Europe. At length, Christian Rome, which places its chief glory in the destruction of idolatry, was ranked with the heathens, by the laws of a powerful and discerning peo-

ple, who are deservedly held in high esteem by all other nations.

The enthusiasm of the common people did not stop at these demonstrations of horror and aversion to popery; accusations and punishments were still continued.

But the most deplorable circumstance was the execution of Lord Stafford, a venerable nobleman, of tried fidelity to his king and country, who had retired from public business, and was closing the career of an honorable life, by the exercise of every domestic virtue. This good man passed for a Papist, though he was not such. He was accused by one of the state informers, of having hired him to murder the king; and though it was proved that he had never spoken to the person who was his accuser, yet the wretch was believed. The innocence of Lord Stafford availed him naught in the day of trial; he was condemned to lose his head; and by the same shameful and wicked weakness that had cost his father his crown and his life, Charles did not dare to pardon him. This example proves that the tyranny of public bodies is always heavier than that of a king. There are a thousand ways to pacify the resentment of a sovereign; there are none to bend the inflexible cruelty of the public, when carried away by prejudice. Each member is filled with the fury that animates the whole, imparts it with redoubled force to his companions, and gives himself up without fear to the most pitiless inhumanity, conscious that an individual is not answerable for the actions of a community.

While the Papists and the Church of England party were exhibiting these bloody spectacles in London, the Presbyterians in Scotland presented a scene no less absurd, and infinitely more abominable. They murdered the archbishop of St. Andrews, primate of that kingdom, where the Episcopal government still continued, because this prelate had stood up in defence of his prerogatives. After this noble action, the Presbyterians assembled the people, and in their sermons openly compared their shocking deed with those of Jael, Ehud, and Judith, recorded in Holy Writ, and to which indeed it bore a close resemblance. From the church they led their infatuated auditors with the sound of drums and bagpipes to Glasgow, of which they made themselves masters. After this they took an oath that they would no longer acknowledge the king as supreme head of the church, nor his brother as king after his death; and that they would show obedience to no one but the Lord, to whom they would sacrifice all the bishops who opposed the workings of the saints.

The king was now obliged to send his natural son, the duke of Monmouth, with a small army against these saints. The Presbyterians marched to meet them with eight thousand men, headed by ministers of the gospel. This army styled itself "the army of the Lord." An old minister got up on a little hillock, and caused his hands to be supported, as we read of Aaron, in order to insure victory to those of his party; notwithstanding which, the army of the Lord was routed at the very first onset,

and twelve hundred of the saints taken prisoners, all of whom the duke treated with the greatest humanity; he hanged only two of the most active of their priests, and set at liberty every one who would take an oath not to make any more disturbances in the country, in God's name. Nine hundred accepted their liberty on these conditions, the remaining three hundred declared that it was better to obey God than man, and that they had rather suffer death themselves than not be allowed to kill all Church of England men and Papists. Upon this they were transported to America; and the ship that was carrying them over being cast away, they all received the crown of martyrdom at the bottom of the sea.

This spirit of folly continued some time longer in England, Scotland, and Ireland; but at length the king found means to restore the public tranquillity, not so much by his prudence perhaps, as by his amiable disposition, and that pleasing affability which won him the hearts of all who approached him, and insensibly softened the gloomy ferocity of discontented factions, and harmonized the minds of jarring parties.

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## THE ENGLISH THEATRE.[1]

Two little English books inform us that this nation, famous for so many excellent works, and so many famous enterprises, is possessed of two ex-

[1] This first appeared with the pseudonym "Jerome Carré," which explains the incidental allusion to Voltaire. In his seventieth year Voltaire undertook the reviewing of

cellent tragic poets; one is Shakespeare, who is said greatly to surpass Corneille: the other, the tender Otway, much superior to the tender Racine.

This dispute turning entirely upon taste, there does not seem any answer to be made to the English. Who can hinder a whole nation from liking a poet of its own better than one of another country? It is impossible to prove to a whole people that it is pleased in the wrong place: but we may refer the matter in dispute between the stage of Paris and that of London to other nations. We therefore address ourselves to all readers, from St. Petersburg to Naples, and we entreat them to decide the controversy.

There is not a man of learning in Russia, in Italy, in Germany, in Spain, in Switzerland, or in Holland, who is not acquainted with "Cinna" and "Phædra"; and very few of them have any knowledge of the works of Shakespeare or Otway. This is a great prejudice in favor of the former; however, it is but a prejudice. The papers relative to the suit should be produced before the bar. "Hamlet" is one of the most admired works of Shakespeare, as well as one of those most frequently represented. We shall faithfully lay it before the judges.

foreign works in the "*Gazette Littéraire*." Shakespeare's plays had been published in twenty volumes, translated by Pierre le Tourneur, with scholarly assistance. The translator's introductory "Essay upon Shakespeare," stirred Voltaire's cynical indignation deeply. He had introduced and championed the English dramatist, whom he proclaimed to be "the sovereign genius of the stage." Royalty and fashion turned from the national poets to do homage to Shakespeare.

## PLAN OF THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET.

The subject of Hamlet, prince of Denmark, is pretty nearly the same as that of Electra.

Hamlet, king of Denmark, was poisoned by his brother Claudius and his queen, Gertrude, who poured poison into his ear while he was asleep. Claudius succeeded the deceased; and a few days after the burial, the widow married the brother-in-law.

Nobody had ever entertained the least suspicion of the late King Hamlet's having been poisoned in the manner above related. Claudius reigns in peace. Two soldiers being upon guard before the gate of Claudius's palace, one says to the other, "How has your hour passed?" The other answers, "Very well, I have not heard a mouse stir." After some discourse of the same nature, the ghost appears, dressed like the late King Hamlet; one of these soldiers says to his comrade: "Speak to this ghost; you are a scholar." "That I will," says the other; "stay and speak, phantom, I command you." The apparition disappears without answering. The two soldiers, in astonishment, talk of this apparition. The learned soldier remembers that he had heard that "the same thing had happened at the time of the death of Cæsar; tombs were opened, the dead in their shrouds screamed and leaped about in the streets of Rome; it without doubt is a presage of some extraordinary event."

At these words the ghost appears a second time; then one of the guards cries out, "Phantom, what

would you have? Can I do anything for you? Is your coming occasioned by any hidden treasures?" Then the cock crows. The ghost walks off slowly; the sentinels propose striking it with a halberd in order to stop it; but it flies; and the soldiers conclude that it is customary for ghosts to vanish at the crowing of the cock, "For," say they, "at the time of Advent (Christmas eve) the bird of dawning sings all night, and then spirits dare not wander any longer; the nights are wholesome, the planets shed no bad influence; fairies and sorcerers are without power at so holy and blessed a season."

Observe, by the by, that this is one of the striking passages that Pope has marked with commas in his edition of Shakespeare, to make readers take notice of its excellence.

After the ghost has thus made his appearance, King Claudius, Gertrude, his queen, and the courtiers, join in a conversation in the hall of the palace. Young Hamlet, son of the poisoned monarch, the hero of the piece, receives with sadness and melancholy the marks of friendship shown him by Claudius and Gertrude; this prince was far from suspecting that his father had been poisoned by them; but he was highly displeased that his mother had so soon married the brother of her first husband. Gertrude dissuades her son from continuing to wear mourning for his father, to no purpose. "It is not," says he, "my coat as black as ink, nor the appearances of grief, which constitute the real mourning; this mourning is at the bottom of the heart, the rest is only vain parade." He declares that he has an

inclination to quit Denmark, and go to school to Wittenberg. "Dear Hamlet," says the queen, "do not go to school to Wittenberg; stay with us." Hamlet answers that he will endeavor to obey her. Claudius is charmed at the answer; and orders that all of his court should go and drink, while the cannons were fired off; though gunpowder was not then invented.

Hamlet, left alone a prey to his reflections, makes the following soliloquy: "What, my mother, whom my father loved to such a degree; my mother, for whom my father found his appetite increase the longer he ate! My mother marries another at the end of a month—another, no more to be compared to him than a satyr is to be compared to the sun! the month being scarce elapsed! What do I say? before she had worn out the shoes with which she followed the body of my poor father! Ah, frailty is the name of woman; my heart bursts,[1] for I must hold my tongue." Here again Pope gives notice to his readers that this passage is worthy of their admiration.

In the meantime the two sentinels come to inform Prince Hamlet that they had seen a ghost which bore a strong resemblance to his father; this gives the prince great uneasiness; he is impatient to see this apparition; he swears that he will speak to it, though hell should gap and bid him hold his peace; and he goes home to wait the close of the day with impatience.

[1] Here M. de Voltaire's translation of Shakespeare is evidently defective; the line in the original is,

"But burst my heart, for I must hold my tongue."

While he is in his apartment at the palace, a young person named Ophelia, daughter of Lord Polonius, great chamberlain, appears in the house of her father, with her brother Laertes. This Ophelia has some inclination for Prince Hamlet. Laertes gives her very good advice.

"Do you see me, sister, a prince, the heir to a kingdom, should not carve for himself; his morsels should be chosen for him; take care how you lose your heart with him, and how you open your chaste treasure to his violent importunities. It is dangerous to pull off one's mask, even by moonlight; putrefaction often destroys the children of the spring before their buds are blown; and in the morning, and the dew of youth, contagious winds are much to be feared."

Ophelia answers, "Ah, dear brother, don't deal with me as some ungracious pastors do, who show the steep and thorny road to heaven, whilst they themselves, like bold libertines, do the reverse of what they preach."

The brother and sister having had this conversation, leave the stage to Prince Hamlet, who returns with a friend and the same sentinels who had seen the ghost. The apparition again presents itself before them; the prince speaks to it with respect and resolution; the ghost answers only by making Hamlet a sign to follow him. "Ah, do not follow him," said his friend; "he that follows a ghost is in danger of losing his senses." "No matter," answers Hamlet, "I will go with him." They endeavor to prevent him, but without success. "My destiny

cries out to me to go," says he, "and makes the smallest of my arteries as strong as the lion of Nemea. Yes, I'll follow him, and I'll make a ghost of whoever opposes me."

Then he goes out with the ghost, and they both return soon after, quite familiar with each other. The ghost informs him that he is in purgatory, and that he is going to relate to him things that will make his hair stand on end like quills upon a porcupine. "'Tis thought," says he, "that I died of the bite of a serpent in my garden, but the serpent is the man who wears my crown; it is my brother; and what is most horrible is, that he put me to death without my so much as receiving extreme unction. Avenge me; farewell, my son; glow-worms show that the morning approaches; farewell, remember me." The friends of Prince Hamlet then return, and ask him what the ghost had said. "It is a very honest ghost," answers the prince, "but swear that you will divulge nothing of what it has intrusted me with." Immediately the voice of the ghost is heard, which cries out to Hamlet's friends, "Swear." "You must swear by my sword," says the prince to them. The ghost cries underground, "Swear by his sword." They swear. Hamlet goes with them without forming any resolution. You may remember that this same Prince Hamlet was in love with Ophelia, daughter of Lord Polonius, great chamberlain, the sister of young Laertes, who travels to France for his improvement. The good man, Polonius, recommends Laertes to his governor, and

tells him in plain terms that the young man sometimes goes to the bawdy-house, and that he should be narrowly watched. While he is giving directions to the governor, his daughter Ophelia enters in a terrible fright, "Ah, my lord! while I was at work in my closet, Prince Hamlet entered with his waistcoat unbuttoned, without hat or garters, with his stockings upon his heels, with knees trembling and knocking against each other, pale as his shirt; he a long time examined my face, as if he was going to draw it, shook my arm, shook his head, heaved several deep sighs, and went off like a blind man who gropes his way." The chamberlain, Polonius, who does not know that Hamlet has seen a ghost, and that he may possibly have lost his senses, thinks that his excessive love for Ophelia may have turned his head; and here the matter rests. The king and queen talk a long time of the madness of the prince. Ambassadors from Norway arrive at court, and hear this accident. The good man, Polonius, who is an old dotard, much more crazy than Hamlet, assures the king that he will take care of this disordered person; " 'Tis my duty," says he, "for what is duty? 'Tis duty just as day is day, night, night, and time, time; therefore since brevity is the soul of wit, and loquacity the body, I will be brief: Your noble son is mad; I call it mad: for what is madness but being mad? In fine, madam, he is mad; this is fact; it is a great pity, it is a great pity it should be true; the only business now is to find the cause of the effect. Now the cause is, that I have a daughter."

To prove that it was love that had deprived the prince of his senses, he reads to the king and queen the letters that Hamlet had written to Ophelia.

While thus the king, the queen, and all the court talk of the melancholy condition of the prince, he arrives in great disorder, and by his discourse confirms the opinion that had been conceived of his madness; he however sometimes makes answers that reveal a soul deeply wounded, and which are replete with good sense. The chamberlains, who have orders to amuse him, propose to him to hear a company of comedians, who had just arrived. Hamlet talks very rationally of plays; the players act a scene before him, he gives his opinion of it with great good sense. Afterward, when he is alone, he declares that he is not so mad as he appears to be. "What," says he, "a player has wept for Hecuba! What's Hecuba to him? What would he then do if his uncle and his mother had poisoned his father, as Claudius and Gertrude have poisoned mine? Ah, cursed poisoner, assassin, fornicator, debauchee, base villain, and I now, what an ass am I? is not this fine conduct in me, the son of a king who has been poisoned; me, from whom heaven and hell demand vengeance, to content myself with evaporating my resentment in words like a common whore? I am satisfied with cursing like a slut, a beggar-woman, a scullion."

He then forms a resolution to avail himself of the above-mentioned players, to discover whether his uncle and his mother had in fact poisoned his father; "for after all," says he, "the apparition may have

deceived me; it is perhaps the devil that hath spoken to me; this matter must be cleared up." Hamlet then directs the players to play a pantomime, in which one is to sleep, and another to pour poison into his ear. It is very certain, that if King Claudius is guilty, he will be greatly surprised when he sees the pantomime; he will turn pale, his guilt will be seen upon his face; Hamlet will be sure of the crime, and will have a right to revenge.

Thus said, thus done. The company comes and represents this scene in dumb show before the king, the queen, and the whole court; and the dumb show is succeeded by a scene in verse. The king and queen look upon these two scenes as highly impertinent; they suspect Hamlet of having played them this trick, and of not being quite so great a madman as he appeared to be; this idea gave them great perplexity; they trembled with fear of having been detected. What course could they take? King Claudius resolves to send Hamlet to England, upon pretext of curing his madness; and writes to his good friend, the king of England, to desire it as a favor of him, that he would hang the young traveller upon the receipt of his letter.

But the queen is desirous of questioning and sounding Hamlet before his departure; and for fear he should do some mischief in his madness, the old chamberlain, Polonius, hides himself behind a tapestry hanging, in order to come to the queen's assistance, if there should be occasion.

The prince, who was mad, or who pretended to be so, comes to confer with his mother, Gertrude.

In his way, he sees in a corner King Claudius, who was seized with a fit of remorse; he is afraid of being one day damned for having poisoned his brother, married his widow, and usurped his crown. He kneels down and makes a short prayer, not worth repeating. Hamlet, at first, has an inclination to grasp the opportunity to kill him; but reflecting that Claudius is in a state of grace, because he is then offering up his prayers to God, he takes care not to kill him in such circumstances. "What a fool I should be," says he; "I should send him directly to heaven, whereas he sent my father to purgatory. Come, my sword, wait for another time in order to stab him; wait till he is drunk, gaming, or swearing, or till he is in bed with some incestuous woman,[1] or till he is doing some other deed that is not likely to work out his salvation; then fall upon him, that he may kick at heaven, and that his soul may be damned, and black as hell, to which he will descend." This likewise is a passage which Pope's commas direct us to admire.

Hamlet then having deferred the murder of Claudius, in order to damn him, comes to confer with his mother; and notwithstanding his madness, overwhelms her with such bitter reproaches of her crime, as pierce her to the very heart. The old chamberlain, Polonius, is apprehensive of his carrying matters too far; he cries out for help behind the hanging; Hamlet takes it for granted that it was the king who had hid himself there, to listen to their

[1] A mistranslation. The verse in Hamlet is, "Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed." Meaning in the embraces of Gertrude, who had been his brother's wife.

conversation. "Ah mother," cries he, "there is a great rat behind the hangings." He thereupon draws his sword, runs to the rat, and kills the good man Polonius. "Ah my son, what are you about?" cries the queen. "Mother," returns Hamlet, "it is the king that I have slain!" "It is a wicked action to kill a king;"[1] "Almost as wicked, my good mother, as to kill a king and lie with his brother." This conversation lasts a long time; and Hamlet, as he goes out, walks upon the dead body of the old chamberlain, and is ready to fall down.[2]

The good lord chamberlain was an old fool, and is represented as such, as has already been seen; his daughter Ophelia, who, no doubt, resembled him in this respect, becomes raving mad when she is informed of her father's death: she runs upon the stage with flowers and straw upon her head, sings ballads, and then goes and drowns herself. Thus there are three mad people in the play, the chamberlain, and Hamlet, without reckoning the other buffoons who play their parts.

The corpse of Ophelia is taken out of the river, and her funeral is prepared. In the meantime King Claudius had made the prince embark for England; Hamlet, while upon his passage, had conceived a suspicion that he had been sent to London with some treacherous design: he finds in the pocket of one of the chamberlains, his conductor, the letter of King Claudius to his friend, the king of England,

[1] This passage is manifestly translated wrong.

[2] This circumstance is entirely of the invention of M. de Voltaire; not contented with depreciating Shakespeare, he even misrepresents him.

sealed with the great seal; in it he finds the king of England earnestly recommended to despatch him the moment of his arrival. What does he do? He happened luckily to have the great seal of his father in his purse; he throws the letter into the sea, and writes another which he signs with the name of Claudius, and requests the king of England to hang the bearers upon their arrival: then he folds up the whole packet, and seals it with the seal of the kingdom.

This done, he finds a pretext for returning to court. The first thing he sees is two grave-diggers digging Ophelia's grave; these two laborers are likewise buffoons in the tragedy. They discuss the question whether Ophelia should be buried in consecrated ground after having drowned herself, and they conclude that she should be buried in Christian burial because she was a young lady of quality. Then they maintain that laborers are the most ancient gentlemen upon earth, because they are of the same trade as Adam. "But was Adam a gentleman?" says one of the grave-diggers. "Yes," answers the other, "for he was the first that ever bore arms." "What, did he bear arms?" says the grave-digger. "Without doubt," says the other; "can a man till the ground without spades and pickaxes? He therefore bore arms; he was a gentleman."

In the midst of these fine harangues, and the songs sung by these gentlemen in the parish church of the palace, arrives Prince Hamlet with one of his friends, and they contemplate the skulls found by the grave-diggers. Hamlet thinks he has discov-

ered the skull of a statesman able to cheat God, then that of a courtier, then the skull of a court lady, and of a knavish lawyer, and he is very liberal of his railleries upon the owners of those skulls. At last the skull of the king's jester is found, and it is concluded that there is not any great difference between the brain of Cæsar or Alexander and that of this jester; in fine, the grave is made while they thus dispute and sing. Holy water is brought by the priests. The body of Ophelia is brought upon the stage. The king and queen follow the bier; Laertes in mourning accompanies the corpse of his sister Ophelia; and when the body is laid in the ground, Laertes, frantic with grief, leaps into the grave. Hamlet, who remembers that he had once loved Ophelia, leaps in likewise. Laertes, enraged at seeing in the same grave with him the person who had killed Polonius, taking him for a rat, flies in his face; they wrestle in the grave, and the king causes them to be parted, in order to preserve decency in the funeral ceremonies.

In the meantime, King Claudius, who is a great politician, perceives that it is absolutely necessary to despatch such a dangerous madman as Prince Hamlet; and since that young prince had not been hanged at London, it is thought highly proper that he should be despatched in Denmark.

The artful Claudius has recourse to the following stratagem. He was used to poisoning: "Hark ye," says he to young Laertes, "Prince Hamlet has killed your father, my great chamberlain; that you may have it in your power to revenge yourself, I shall

propose to you a little piece of chivalry: I will lay a wager with you that in twelve passes you will not hit Hamlet three times; you shall fence with him before the whole court. You shall have a sharp foil, the point of which I have dipped in a poison exceeding subtile. If you unluckily should not be able to hit the prince, I will take care to have a bottle of poisoned wine ready for him upon the table. People that fence must drink: Hamlet will drink, and one way or other must lose his life." Laertes thinks the expedient, for amusement and revenge, admirably devised.

Hamlet accepts the challenge; bottles are placed upon the table; two champions appear with foils in their hands in the presence of King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, and the whole Danish court; they fence; Laertes wounds Hamlet with his poisoned foil. Hamlet, finding himself wounded, cries out: "Treachery"; and, in a rage, tears the poisoned foil from Laertes, stabs him, and stabs the king: Queen Gertrude, in a fight, drinks, in order to recover herself; thus she is poisoned likewise; and all four, that is, King Claudius, Gertrude, Laertes, and Hamlet, die upon the stage.

It is remarkable that an express just then arrives that the two chamberlains, who had sailed for England with the packet sealed with the great seal of Denmark, had been despatched upon their landing. Thus there does not remain one person of the drama alive: but, to supply the place of the deceased, there is one Fort-en-bras, a relative of the family, who had conquered Poland during the representation of

the piece, and who comes at the conclusion of it to offer himself as a candidate for the throne of Denmark.

This is the whole plan of the celebrated tragedy of "Hamlet," the masterpiece of the London theatre. Such is the work that is preferred to "Cinna"!

Here there are two important questions to be solved; the first is, How could so many wonderful things be generated in one head alone? For it must be acknowledged that all the plays of the divine Shakespeare are in the very same taste. The second is, How have audiences been able to work themselves up to see these pieces with transport, and how can they still be attended to in an age which has produced the "Cato" of Addison?

The astonishment occasioned by the first wonder will cease entirely when it is known that Shakespeare has taken the subjects of all his tragedies from history or romances; and that he has done nothing more than turn into dialogues the romances of Claudius, Gertrude and Hamlet, written entirely by Saxo, the grammarian, to whom the whole glory of the performance is due.

The second question, that is, as to the pleasure taken in seeing these tragedies, is somewhat more difficult to be accounted for; but this seems to be the reason of it, according to the profound reflections of certain philosophers:

Chairmen, sailors, hackney-coachmen, apprentice boys, butchers, and clerks are passionately fond of fights; give them cock-fights, bull-fights, or prize-fights, buryings, duels, executions, witch-

craft and ghosts, and they crowd to the theatre; many a nobleman is as curious as the populace. The citizens of London found in the tragedies of Shakespeare everything that can please the curious. Those at court were obliged to conform to the current taste: how could they avoid admiring what the most rational of the citizens admired? There was nothing better to be seen during a hundred and fifty years; admiration gathered strength, and was converted into idolatry. A few strokes of genius, a few happy lines replete with nature and force, which spectators got by heart whether they would or no, procured indulgence for the rest; and soon the whole piece succeeded by means of a few detached beauties.

Certain it is, that such beauties are to be met with in Shakespeare. M. de Voltaire is the first who caused them to be known in France; it is he who taught us, about thirty years ago, the names of Milton and Shakespeare: but the translations which he has given us of some passages of these authors, are they faithful? He apprises us himself that they are not; he has rather copied than translated. In this manner he has rendered in verse the soliloquy of Hamlet at the beginning of the second scene of the third act[1]:

Let's make a choice, and in a moment pass
From life to death, from being to the grave.
Just gods, if gods there be, instruct my soul.
Must I grow gray beneath oppression's weight;
Support or end at once my life and woe?
What holds my hand; what is it then to die?

[1] Voltaire's French paraphrase is given in a preceding article on "English Tragedy."

Death is the end of all our ills ; 'tis rest ;
After much tossing, 'tis a sleep profound.
But we are menaced, we are told that death
Is followed by eternal punishments.
Oh death! dire moment! oh eternity!
Each heart with horror shrinks to hear thee named.
Were it not for thee, who could this life endure ?
Who'd bear to cringe and fawn on knaves in power ?
Who would a mistress' follies idolize ;
Adore the caprice of a minister ;
And show the sorrows of his wounded soul
To those who see his grief with scornful eyes ?
Death were a good in these extremities ;
But conscience speaks, it cries, " Rash mortal, hold."
Conscience forbids this happy homicide,
And of the brave it timid Christians makes.

Through all the obscurity of this literal translation, which can only render each word of the English by the word which answers to it in French, it is easy to discover the genius of the English language; its natural turn, which is afraid neither of the lowest nor of the most gigantic ideas; its energy, which other nations would look upon as harshness; its boldness, which minds not accustomed to foreign turns of expression would look upon as bombast; but under these veils may be discovered profoundness, something that engages and that affects much more than eloquence could. Hence it is that almost all the English have this soliloquy by heart. It is an unpolished diamond that has spots; but if it was polished it would lose part of its weight.

There, perhaps, is not a more striking example of the diversity of tastes in different nations. After this let critics talk of the laws of Aristotle, the three unities, decency, and the necessity of never leaving the stage empty as well as of never making any person of the drama enter or go out without an obvious

reason; of connecting an intrigue with art, and unravelling it naturally; of expressing oneself in terms at once noble and simple; of making princes speak in such a manner as becomes their quality, and as they would choose to do; of never deviating from the rules of language. It is evident that there is a way of charming a whole nation without taking all this trouble.

If Shakespeare, for these reasons, bears the palm from Corneille, we will acknowledge that Racine is contemptible in comparison with the tender and elegant Otway. To be convinced of this, it will be sufficient to cast an eye upon the following abstract of the tragedy entitled "The Orphan."

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## PLAN OF "THE ORPHAN."

An old gentleman of Bohemia, named Acasto, had retired to his castle with his two sons, Castalio and Polydore: it is true, these are no more Bohemian names, than that of Claudius is Danish. Serina, his daughter, lives with him; he has also at his house a Monimia, who is very different from the Monimia of Racine. This young lady was intrusted to his care by her deceased father. In the castle of Lord Acasto there is a chaplain, a page, and two *valets de chambre;* this is the retinue of the good man, at least all of it that is seen upon the stage. Add to these, Serina's maid, and a brother of Monimia's, a passionate man, just come from Hungary, and you have all the persons of the drama.

If the tragedy of "Hamlet" is opened by two sentinels, that of "The Orphan" is opened by two domestics; for great men should by all means be imitated. These domestics talk of their good master Acasto, and his two sons, Castalio and Polydore, whose only amusement is hunting. Not to keep the reader any longer in suspense, it is proper to inform him that, if he suspects that the two brothers are both in love with Monimia, as in Racine, he is not mistaken; but he will, in all likelihood, be somewhat surprised at being told that Castalio, one of the brothers, who is loved by Monimia, gives his dear Polydore leave to lie with her if he can; he is satisfied, provided he himself may have the same liberty; for he swears that he has no desire to marry her, and "that he will marry when he is old, in order to mortify the flesh."

However, immediately after having thus declared against marriage, he privately marries Monimia, and Acasto's chaplain gives them the nuptial benediction. During these transactions, M. Chamont, brother of Monimia, arrives from Hungary; this M. Chamont is a very odd man, and very hard to be pleased; he immediately asks his sister whether she has her maidenhead.[1] Monimia swears to him that her honor is unviolated. "Ah, wherefore have you any doubt concerning my maidenhead, brother?" says she. "Hear me, my sister," says Chamont, "I not long since had a dream in Hungary; my bed shook, I saw you between two young fellows, who

[1] This passage sufficiently shows how unfairly M. de Voltaire plays the critic upon English authors; there is no such low expression in the tragedy referred to.

caressed you, turn about. I took my great sword, I ran to them; and upon waking, I found that I had pierced the figured tapestry, just at a place that represented the Theban brothers, Polinices and Etheocles, killing one another."[1]

"Well, brother," says Monimia, "since you have been tormented in your sleep, you must torment me waking." "Oh, this is not all, sister; do not justify yourself too fast. As I walked along, thinking of my dream, I met a toothless old hag, bent double with age, her vaulted back was clothed with a piece of an old hanging, her thighs were hardly covered by rags of all sorts of colors—variety of wretchedness—she gathered a few sticks, she asked me where I was going, and bade me make haste, if I desired to preserve my sister; in fine, she spoke to me of Castalio and Polydore."

Monimia is greatly surprised at this adventure; she immediately confesses that she was engaged to Castalio; but she swears to her brother that she had never lain with him.

M. Chamont is by no means satisfied with this confession; he is a rough man, as has been already hinted; he goes in quest of the chaplain. "Come," says he, "Mr. Gravity, tell me, are not you chaplain to the family?" "And you, sir; are you not an officer?" returns the chaplain. "Yes, friend," says

[1] It seems probable that M. de Voltaire had not Otway's piece by him when he wrote this, otherwise it is hardly possible to conceive how he could give such a translation of the following passage of Otway:

> I found my weapon had the arras pierced,
> Just where the fatal tale was interwoven,
> How the unhappy Theban slew his father.

Chamont. "I was once an officer myself," says the chaplain, "but my friends consigned me to the church; yet I am an honest man, though I wear black; I am tolerably respected in the family; I do not pretend to know more than other people, I concern myself about nobody's affairs but my own; I rise early, study little, eat and drink merrily; and for this my behavior am held in esteem by everybody." "Did you know old Chamont, my father?" says the officer. "Yes," says the chaplain, "I was greatly concerned for his death." "What, you loved him?" says Chamont; "I could embrace you for that; tell me, do you think Castalio loves my sister?" "Do I think he loves her?" says the chaplain. "Aye, do you think he loves her?" replies Chamont. "Faith I never asked him," answers the chaplain, "and I am surprised you should ask me such a question." "Ah, hypocrite," cries Chamont, "you are like all those of your profession, a good-for-nothing fellow; you have not courage to speak the truth, and you pretend to teach it: are you a party concerned in this affair? What do you do in it? Curse upon the villain's serious face; you goggle your eyes just as bawds do; they talk of heaven, they look devoutly, and tell lies; they preach like a priest, and thou art a bawd."

What is pleasant enough is that the chaplain, won by these obliging expressions, owns that he had that morning married Castalio and Monimia in a garret.[1]

The brother is well enough satisfied, and goes with the chaplain. The married couple arrive; noth-

[1] In the original, it is in a grove.

ing remains but to consummate the marriage. Those who are not let into the secret might think, from what had passed before, that this ceremony was to be performed on the stage; but the modest Monimia only bids her husband come and knock three times at her chamber door, when all the family should be asleep. Polydore, the brother, hears what was said from between the side scenes; and not knowing that his brother Castalio is Monimia's husband, he resolves to be beforehand with him, and to go without delay and make sure of Monimia's first favors. He addresses himself to the little rogue of a page, promises him sweetmeats and money, if he would amuse his brother Castalio during part of the night: the page plays his part admirably; he talks to Castalio of Monimia's love, of her garters, and her breasts; he is for singing him a song; and thus he makes him lose time.

Polydore did not lose his; he went to Monimia's door, he struck three times gently, the maid opened to him; and thus he contrived to lie with his brother's wife.

At last Castalio comes to the door, and gives three gentle raps; the servant, who ought to know both him and his brother by their voices, does not so much as apprehend a mistake; she thinks that Polydore is the pretended husband who desires admittance, and that it is the true husband Castalio who is in bed; she bids him go about his business, tells him he is a madman; it is to no purpose for him to tell his name, she shuts the door in his face; he is treated by the maid just as Amphitryon is by Sofia.

Polydore having reaped the fruits of his stratagem, probably without uttering a single word, leaves his conquest, and returns to his own bed. Castalio, who was refused admittance, is seized with despair, becomes frantic, rolls himself upon the floor, inveighs against the whole sex; and concludes that, from the time of Eve, who fell in love with the devil, and damned the human species, women have always given rise to ills of every kind.

Monimia, who rose in haste to meet her dear Castalio, in whose company she hoped to enjoy some rapturous moments, meets him, and is going to embrace him; he treats her with the utmost cruelty, and pulls her by the hair off the stage.

M. Chamont, who still remembers his dream, and the old witch he had met, comes with great gravity to ask his sister an account of the consummation of her marriage. The poor woman owns that her husband, after having passed the night with her in raptures, had dragged her about by the hair upon the floor.

This Chamont, who is not to be trifled with, goes in quest of the father—who by the by had been taken ill during the representation of the tragedy, through his great age—he speaks to him in the same tone that he had before used to the chaplain; "Do you know," says he, "that your son Castalio has married my sister?" "I am sorry for it," answers the good man. "How! sorry for it!" says Chamont; "by God there's not a nobleman that might not be proud to marry my sister; but damn me he has used her ill; either teach him manners,

or I'll set your house on fire." "Well, well, I'll do you justice; farewell, my dear boy," says Acasto.

The poor father goes in quest of his son Castalio, in order to examine him with regard to what had passed; whilst he is in conversation with him, Polydore is desirous of knowing how Monimia was, after having passed the night with him; he thinks he had only enjoyed his brother's mistress in virtue of the permission he had received from him: this discourse makes Monimia begin to suspect her mistake; in fine, Polydore owns that he had enjoyed her; Monimia faints away, and recovers her senses only to abandon herself to the transports of despair.

If such a subject, such language, and such manners, disgust persons of taste all over Europe, they ought to excuse the author: he never so much as suspected that there was anything extravagant in his piece: he dedicates it to the duchess of Cleveland with the simplicity and want of art with which he wrote it; he congratulates that lady upon having had two children by Charles II.

### SHORT REFLECTIONS.

We are fully sensible how much the Monimia of Racine in "Mithridates" is inferior to the Monimia of Mr. Thomas Otway; it is the same author who wrote "Venice Preserved"; it is a pity this "Venice Preserved" has not been translated with exactness; we are deprived of a senator who bites the legs of his mistress, who plays the dog, who barks, and is whipped out of doors; we should likewise have had the pleasure of seeing a scaffold, a wheel, a priest

who comes to exhort Captain Pierre at his execution, and who is abused and bidden to go about his business by the latter; there are many other strokes of this nature, which the translator has omitted in compliance with our false delicacy.

We cannot sufficiently lament that the translator has, with the same cruelty, deprived us of the finest scenes of Shakespeare's "Othello." With what pleasure should we have seen the first scene at Venice, and the last at Cyprus! First of all, a Moor runs away with the daughter of a senator: Iago, the Moor's officer, runs to the window of the father's house; the father appears in his shirt at the window. "Zounds," says he, "put on your clothes; a black ram has got upon your white ewe; come, come, rise and come down, or the devil will make you a grandsire."

Senator.—"What's the matter, what would you be at? Are you a mad man?"

Iago.—"Zounds, sir, are you one of those who would not serve God if the devil forbade them? We are come to do you a service, and you take us for ruffians; I tell you your daughter will be covered by a Barbary horse; your grandchildren will neigh after you, and African nags will be your cousins-german."

Senator.—"What profane rogue talks to me at this rate?"

Iago.—"Know that your daughter Desdemona and the Moor Othello now make the beast with two backs."

This same Iago accompanies to Cyprus the Moor

Othello and the lady Desdemona, whom the senate of Venice kindly grants, in spite[1] of the father, for a wife to the Moor, whom they appoint governor of Cyprus.

Scarcely have they arrived in that island, when Iago undertakes to make the Moor jealous of his wife, and to inspire him with a suspicion of her fidelity. The Moor begins to feel some inquietude, he makes the following reflections. "After all," says he, "what sense had I of the pleasure that others had given her, and of her debauchery? I did not see it, it did not hurt me; I slept as well as usual. When a thing has been stolen from us of which we had no occasion, if we are ignorant of the theft, we have lost nothing. I had been happy if the whole army, and even the pioneers, had enjoyed her, so as I had known nothing of the matter. Oh no—farewell all content—farewell the plumed troops, farewell the proud war that makes a virtue of ambition; farewell the neighing steeds and the shrill trumpets; the fife that pierces the ear, and the drum that excites the courage, the royal banner; and all the rank, pride, pomp, and various circumstances of glorious war; and you, you mortal engines, whose rude throats imitate those of the immortal Jupiter; farewell, Othello has now no occupation."

This is another of the admirable passages distinguished by Pope's commas.

Iago.—"Is it possible, my lord?"

Othello *(taking him by the throat)*.—"Villain,

[1] This is false, for Brabantio, in Shakespeare, consents to the match as soon as his daughter declares in favor of Othello.

prove that my wife's a whore, give me an ocular proof of it; or by the worth of the eternal soul of man, it would have been better for you, you had been born a dog."

Iago.—"This office by no means pleases me; but since I have gone so far through pure honesty and friendship for you, I will proceed. I lay the other night with your lieutenant Cassio; and could not sleep for the toothache. You cannot but know that there are people so loose of soul, that in their sleep they talk of their affairs; Cassio is one of these: he said in his sleep, 'Dear Desdemona, let us be careful, let us hide our loves.' In speaking, he took me by the hand, he patted me, he cried, 'Oh, charming creature!' he kissed me with transport, as if he had by the roots torn up kisses planted upon my lips, he put his[1] thighs upon my legs, he sighed, he breathed short, he kissed me, he cried out, 'Cursed fate which has given you to the Moor!'"

Upon these proofs, so very decently related, and the handkerchief of Othello, which Cassio had found by accident, the Moorish general strangles his wife in her bed; but he kisses her before he puts her to death. "Come," says he, "die, thou whore." "Ah, kill me to-morrow, let me live to-night," says she. "Wretch, if you stir," cries he. "Give me but one half hour," says she. "No," answers he. "After that I will delay you no longer; let me at least say my prayers," says she. "No, it is too late," answers Othello. He strangles her; and Desdemona, after she is strangled, cries out that she is innocent.

[1] Wrongly translated.

When Desdemona is dead, the senate recalls Othello: he is seized in order to be carried to Venice to take his trial. "Hold," says he, "a word or two. Tell the senate, that one day at Aleppo I found a turbaned Turk, who beat a Venetian, and made a jest of the republic; I took by the beard, the circumcised dog, and smote him thus." At these words he stabs himself.

A French translator, who has given us sketches of several English pieces, and among others, of the "Moor of Venice," partly in verse, partly in prose, has not translated any of these important passages which we have laid before our readers; he makes Othello express himself thus:

*L'art n'est pas fait pour moi; c'est un fard que je hais,*
*Dites leur qu'Othello plus amoureux que sage,*
*Quoique époux adoré, jaloux jusques à la rage,*
*Trompé par un esclave, aveuglé par l'erreur*
*Immola son épouse, & se perça le cœur.*

Art I detest, I all disguise abhor.
Say that Othello, more in love than wise,
Imposed on by a slave, with error blind,
Murdered his wife, then pierced his guilty breast.

There is not a word of this in the original; *"l'art n'est pas fait pour moi,"* is taken from the tragedy of *"Zaïre,"* but the rest is not.

The reader now has it in his power to decide the dispute for pre-eminence between the tragedies of London and Paris.

## THE SEVERAL REVOLUTIONS IN THE TRAGIC ART.

Who would think that the tragic art is partly due to Minos? If one of the infernal judges is the inventor of this species of poetry, it is no wonder it should be of a nature somewhat gloomy: a more gay origin is, generally speaking, assigned to it. Thespis and other drunkards are thought to have introduced this show among the Greeks at the time of vintage; but if we may credit what Plato says in his dialogue, entitled "Minos," there were dramatic pieces played during the reign of this prince. Thespis carried his actors about in a cart. But in Crete and other countries, long before the age of Thespis, actors performed only in the temples. Tragedy, at its first invention, was consecrated to the gods; hence the hymns of the chorus almost always turn upon the praises of the gods in the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. A poet was not permitted to present the public with a piece till he was forty years of age; they were called "*Tragedidaskaloi*"—doctors in tragedy. Their works were represented only at the time of the great festivals; the money spent by the public upon these spectacles was a sacred treasure.

Eubulus, or Eubolis, or Ebylys, made a law to punish with death whoever should propose applying this money to profane purposes. For this reason Demosthenes, in his second "Olynthiac," uses so much caution and address in order to engage the Athenians to spend this money in the war against

Philip; it is much the same thing as if an attempt should be made in Italy to pay soldiers with the treasure of our Lady of Loretto.

These public diversions were, among the Greeks, connected with their religious ceremonies. It is well known that among the Egyptians, songs, dances and representations made an essential part of the ceremonies reputed sacred. The Jews borrowed these customs from the Egyptians, as every ignorant and barbarous nation endeavors to imitate its learned and polite neighbors; hence those Jewish festivals, those dances of priests before the ark, those trumpets, those hymns, and so many other ceremonies entirely Egyptian.

This is not all; the truly great tragedies, the awful and terrible representations were sacred mysteries which were celebrated in the greatest temples of the earth in the presence of the initiated alone; there the habits, the decorations, and the machines, were adapted to the subject, and the subject related to the present life as well as to that which is to come.

At first it was a great chorus, at the head of which was the hierophant: "Prepare," cried he, "to see with the eyes of the soul, the governor of the universe. He is single, he is alone self-existent, and all other beings owe their existence to him; he extends his power and his works everywhere; he sees all things; he cannot be seen by mortals."

This strophe was repeated by the chorus; silence was kept for some time after; this was a true prologue. The piece began by darkness spread over the theatre; actors appeared by the feeble glimmering

of a lamp; they wandered upon mountains, and descended into caves; they hit one another; they marched like wild people; their discourse and their gestures expressed the uncertainty of human conduct and all the errors of our lives. The scene changed; hell appeared in all its horror; criminals confessed their crimes, and acknowledged the justice of divine vengeance. Of this Virgil gives an admirable detail, in the sixth book of his "Æneid," which is nothing else than a description of the mysteries; and this proves that he is not in the wrong in putting these words in the mouth of Phlegias:

> Be just, ye mortals, and the gods revere.

The fool in "Scarron" makes a mistake when he says:

> This was indeed said very well,
> But what's advice, when given in hell?

It was of use to the spectators. At last the Elysian fields, inhabited by the just, were seen: they sang the goodness of God, of one true God the architect of the universe; they instructed the spectators in all their duties. In this manner Stobeus speaks of these sublime exhibitions of which some faint traces are to be found in the scattered fragments of antiquity.

Among the Romans, comedy was admitted after the first Punic war, in order to accomplish a vow which was made in order to avert a plague, and to appease the gods, as Livy informs us in his seventh book. It was a very solemn act of religion. The pieces of Livius Andronicus made a part of the holy

ceremony of the secular games. There never was a theatre without images of the gods and altars.

The Christians regarded the Pagan ceremonies with the same horror as the Jews, though they retained some of them. The first Fathers of the Church were desirous of separating the Christians from the Gentiles in every respect; they declaimed loudly against exhibitions. The theatre, which was the place of residence of the inferior divinities of the ancients, appeared to them the devil's empire. Tertullian, the African, says, in his book concerning theatrical exhibitions, that "The devil raises actors upon buskins to give the lie to Jesus Christ, who has declared that no man can add a cubit to his stature." St. Gregory of Nazianzen opened a Christian theatre, as we are told by Sozomenus; one St. Apollinarius did as much; it is Sozomenus who informs us of this in his ecclesiastical history. The subjects of these pieces were taken from the Old and New Testaments; it seems highly probable that a tradition concerning these theatrical performances gave rise to the mysteries which were for some time represented almost all over Europe.

Castelvetro assures us, in his "Treatise upon Poetry," that the passion of Jesus Christ was played from time immemorial throughout all Italy. We imitated these representations of the Italians, from whom we derive every art; and we began to imitate them very late; as we have done in all the liberal as well as the mechanical arts.

We did not begin these exercises till about the fourteenth century: the citizens of Paris made their

first essays at St. Maur. The mysteries were represented at Paris upon the entry of Charles VI., in 1380.

It is generally thought that these were scandalous exhibitions, indecent pleasantries upon the mysteries of our holy religion, upon our Saviour's being born in a stable, upon the ox and the ass, upon the star that guided the three kings, upon those kings themselves, upon the jealousy of Joseph, etc. We may form a judgment of this from our Christian gambols, which are pleasantries as comic as blamable, and improper upon all these ineffable events. Almost everybody has heard of the verses with which one of these tragedies concerning the Passion begins:

*Matthieu! Plaît-il Dieu?*
*Prends ton épieu.*
*Prendrai-je aussi mon épée?*
*Oui & suis-moi en Galilée.*

Matthew! Thy will God let me know!
Take up your staff without delay.
Shall I not take my sword also?
Do, and to Galilee take thy way.

It is said, that in the tragedy of "The Resurrection," an angel speaks to God the Father in terms that are absolutely blasphemous.

There is not a word of this in the mysterious pieces which have reached our times; these works were, for the most part, extremely serious; there was nothing worthy of censure in them, but the uncouth language spoken in those days; they consisted of the Holy Scripture reduced to dialogues, and represented in actions; in them, choruses sang

the praises of God: there was more pomp and magnificence of decoration upon the stage than was ever seen by us; the city company consisted of more than a hundred actors, exclusive of attendants, servants, and scene-drawers: accordingly the house was crowded, and a single box, for the time of Lent, was hired for twenty crowns, even before the establishment of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. This appears from the register of the Parliament of Paris for the year 1541.

Preachers complained that their sermons were no longer frequented, for the monologue was always jealous of the dialogue: the sermons were very far from being as decent as the dramatic pieces of those ages: those who desire to be convinced of this need only read the sermons of Menot, and of all his contemporaries.

In 1541, however, the attorney-general, by his requisition of November 9, maintains, in Article ii, that "Sermons are much more decent than mysteries, as they are preached by divines, of learning and knowledge; whereas the acts are exhibited by illiterate persons."

Without entering into any longer detail upon the mysteries, and the moral pieces that succeeded them, it will be sufficient to say that the Italians, who first exhibited these plays, were the first who relinquished them: Cardinal Bibiena, Pope Leo X., and Archbishop Trissino, restored the theatre of the Greeks as far as they were able; there was not then an insolent pedant to be found, who had the impudence to think he could brand the art of Sophocles,

which the popes themselves had undertaken to revive in Rome.

The city of Vicenza, in 1514, was at a vast expense to represent the first tragedy that had been seen in Rome since the downfall of the empire; it was played in the town house, and spectators attended from the extremities of Italy. The piece is the work of Archbishop Trissino; it is noble, regular, and written with purity of language; it has choruses; the spirit of antiquity breathes through it; the author may, however, be reproached for his prolix declamation, his want of intrigue, and languor; these were the faults of the Greeks; he copied them too much in their faults, but he attained to some of their excellencies. Two years after, Pope Leo X. caused the "Rosamonda" of Rucellai to be represented at Florence, with a magnificence greatly surpassing that of Vicenza. Italy was divided between Rucellai and Trissino.

Comedy rose long before by the genius of Cardinal Bibiena, who gave the *"Calandra"* in 1482. After him came the comedies of the immortal Ariosto, then the famous *"Mandragora"* of Machiavelli; in fine, the taste for pastoral prevailed. The *"Aminta"* of Tasso had the success it deserved, and the "Pastor Fido" had still greater. A hundred passages of the "Pastor Fido" formerly were, and still are, known by heart all over Europe; they will pass to the latest posterity. Nothing is really excellent but what all nations acknowledge to be so; that people is to be pitied that is single in admiring its music, its painting, its eloquence, or its poetry.

While the "Pastor Fido" charmed all Europe, while whole scenes of it were repeated everywhere, while it was translated into all the languages of Europe, in what a state were polite literature and the theatres in other countries! They were in the same state in which we were all, that is, in a state of barbarism. The Spaniards had their *autos sacramentales,* that is, their sacramental acts. Lope de Vega, a genius worthy to be the reformer of that age, was subdued by his age: he says that, in order to please, he is under the necessity of locking up ancient authors of merit, lest they should reproach him with his absurdities; in one of his best pieces, entitled "Don Raymond," this Don Raymond, son of the king of Navarre, is disguised like a clown; the Infanta of Leon, his mistress, is disguised like a faggot-maker; a prince of Leon like a pilgrim. The scene is partly laid at a public house.

With regard to the French, what were their favorite books and theatrical exhibitions? "Garagantua's Chapter upon Bum-fodder," the "Oracle of the Bottle," and the pieces of "Christian and Hardy." Seventy-two years passed from the time of Jodelle, who, in the reign of Henry II., had made a vain attempt to revive the art of the Greeks, without anything supportable being once produced by the French: at last, Mairet, gentleman to the duke of Montmorency, after having long struggled with the depraved taste of his age, composed his tragedy of *"Sophonisba,"* which has not the least resemblance to that of Archbishop Trissino. It is somewhat sin-

gular that the revival of the theatre, and of the rules of dramatic poetry, should begin both in Italy and France by a piece entitled *"Sophonisba."* This piece of Mairet's is the first we have in which the three unities are not violated; it served as a model to most of the tragedies which were written afterward; it was played in 1629, a little before Corneille began to cultivate tragedy; and it was so well liked, notwithstanding its faults, that the piece which Corneille afterward wrote upon the same subject had no success; therefore that of Mairet opened the true career of tragedy, into which Rotrou entered, and this poet surpassed his master: his tragedy of "Wenceslaus" is still played; it is indeed a very faulty piece, but the first scene of it, and almost all the fourth act, are masterpieces.

Corneille afterward made his appearance; his *"Médée,"* which is merely declamatory, had some success; but *"Le Cid,"* an imitation of a Spanish tragedy, was the first piece whose reputation was extended beyond France, and that obtained all suffrages, except those of Cardinal Richelieu and Scudéri. Everybody knows to what pitch of sublimity Corneille soared in the fine scenes of the *"Horace"* and *"Cinna"* in the characters of Cornelia and Severus, and in the fifth act of *"Rodogune."* If *"Médée," "Pertharite," "Théodore," "Œdipe," "Bérénice," "Suréna," "Otho," "Sophonisbe," "Pulchérie," "Agésilas," "Attila," "Don Sanche,"* and the "Golden Fleece," were altogether unworthy of him; his fine pieces, and the admirable passages

scattered up and down in the indifferent ones, will cause him to be always justly considered as the father of tragedy.

It is unnecessary to speak here of the poet who rivalled and even surpassed this great man when his genius began to decline. Authors were then no longer allowed to neglect language and the art of versification in their tragedies; and whatever was not written with the elegance of Racine was despised.

It is true, we have been reproached, and not without reason, that our theatre was an eternal school of gallantry, and of a sort of coquetry which has in it nothing of a tragic nature. Corneille has been justly censured for having made Theseus and Dirce talk of love during the time of the plague; for having put little ridiculous pieces of coquetry in the mouth of Cleopatra; and finally, for having almost always treated love in an unaffecting manner in his works, without ever making it a strong passion, except in the frenzy of Camilla, and the tender scenes of *"Le Cid"* which he borrowed from Guillem de Castro and embellished. The elegant Racine was not reproached with insipid courtship and low expressions; but it was soon perceived that almost all his pieces, as well as those of succeeding authors, contained a declaration of love, a quarrel, a reconciliation, and a scene of jealousy. It has been asserted that this uniformity of little unaffecting intrigues would have greatly debased the tragedies of this amiable poet, if he had not known how to conceal this defect by all the charms of

poetry, the graces of diction, the sweetness of a soft eloquence, and all the resources of art.

Among the striking beauties of our theatre there was another concealed defect which was not perceived, because the public could not of itself have ideas superior to those of these great masters. This defect was first taken notice of by St. Évremond; he says that our pieces do not make an impression sufficiently strong; that what should excite compassion causes at most only tenderness; that emotion holds the place of agitation, astonishment of horror; and that our sentiments are almost always defective in the profound.

It must be acknowledged that St. Évremond has laid his finger upon the secret wound of the French theatre; critics may talk ever so much of St. Évremond's being the author of the wretched comedy of "Sir Politic Wou'd-be," and of that of the opera; that his little poems, written for the amusement of company, are the most insipid of any extant in our language, that he only piddled with phrases; notwithstanding all this, an author entirely destitute of genius may have considerable penetration and taste. He, doubtless, showed a very just taste when he thus discovered the cause why most of our pieces are so languishing.

We have almost always wanted a degree of warmth; every other quality we possess. The source of this languor, of this weak monotony, was partly that little spirit of gallantry then so dear to courtiers and to women, which converted tragedy into conversations in the spirit of those of Clelia.

Other tragedies were sometimes long political debates; these have spoiled *"Sertorius,"* rendered *"Othon"* altogether insipid, and have made *"Suréna"* and *"Attila"* quite insupportable. But another reason prevented authors from employing much of the pathetic upon the stage, and made it impossible for an action represented to be completely tragic; this was the construction of the theatre and the narrowness of the place of exhibition. Our theatres were, in comparison with those of the Greeks and Romans, what our market-places, our Greve, and our little village fountains, to which water carriers repair to fill their pails, are in comparison with the aqueducts, the fountains of Agrippa, the Forum Trajani, the Coliseum and the Capitol.

Our theatres deserved excommunication, no doubt, when buffoons hired a tennis court to play *"Cinna"* upon boards, and when these ignorant creatures, dressed like mountebanks, impersonated Cæsar and Augustus in full-bottomed wigs and laced hats.

The stage was then altogether low and despicable. Comedians had a patent, they bought a tennis-court, they formed a company as merchants form a society. This was not the theatre of Pericles. What could they perform upon about a score of boards loaded with spectators? What pomp or magnificence could entertain the eye? What grand theatrical action could be carried into execution? What liberty could the imagination of the poet enjoy? There was a necessity for pieces to consist of long narratives; a dramatic piece was rather a

concatenation of conversations than an action. Every performer was desirous of shining in a long soliloquy; they rejected a piece that was without such; Corneille was obliged to open his tragedy of *"Cinna"* with Emilia's unnecessary soliloquy, which is now omitted.

This form excluded all theatrical action, all emphatic expressions of the passions, those striking pictures of human misery, those terrible and affecting strokes which tear the heart; it was only touched by the poet, it should have been torn. Declamation, which, till the time of Mademoiselle Le Couvreur was a measured recitative, a noted song in a manner, obstructed still more those outbursts of nature which are represented by a word, by an attitude, by silence, by a cry which escapes in the anguish of grief. These strokes were first made known to us by Mademoiselle Dumesnil, when, in *"Mérope,"* with distracted eyes and a broken voice, she, raising her trembling hand, prepared to sacrifice her own son; when Narbas stopped her; when, letting her dagger fall, she was seen to faint away in the arms of her women; when she started from this momentary death with the transports of a mother, and when afterward, darting forward to Poliphontes and crossing the stage in an instant, she, with tears in her eyes, a face as pale as death, thick sobs and arms extended, cried out, *"Barbare, il est mon fils."* "Wretch, he is my son." We have seen Baron; his deportment was noble and becoming, but that was his whole excellence. Mademoiselle La Couvreur had grace, just expression, sim-

plicity, truth and dignity, combined with ease; but for the grand pathos of action, we saw the first instance of it in Mademoiselle Dumesnil.

Something still superior, if possible, we have seen in Mademoiselle Clairon, and the player who takes the part of Tancred in the third act of the piece of that name, and at the end of the fifth; souls were never agitated by such violent emotions, never were tears shed in greater abundance. The perfection of the player's art showed itself upon those two occasions with a force, of which, till then, we had no idea; and Mademoiselle Clairon must be allowed to have surpassed all the painters in the kingdom.

If in the fourth act of *"Mahomet"* there had been young players who could form themselves upon this great model, a Seid who could be at once enthusiastic and tender, fierce through fanaticism, humane by nature, who knew how to shudder and to weep; a Palmira animated, compassionate, terrified, trembling at the crime she is going to commit; who could feel horror, repentance and despair at the moment the crime is committed; a father, truly so, who should appear to have the bowels, the voice, and the deportment of a father; a father, who should acknowledge his two children in his two murderers, who should embrace them, shedding tears with his blood; who should mix his tears with those of his children, who should rise to clasp them in his arms, who should fall back and throw himself upon them; in fine, if there was everything that the natural horror of death can furnish a picture with, this situation would even surpass those already mentioned.

It is but a few years since players have ventured to be what they should be, that is, living pictures; before they declaimed. We know, and the public knows it better than we do, that poets should not be too lavish of those terrible and shocking actions which make the greatest impression when they are well introduced and properly managed, but are quite impertinent when they have no relation to the subject. A piece badly written, whose plot is badly unravelled, obscure, laden with incredible incidents, which has no other merit but that which pantomime and decorations bestow upon it, is a disgusting monster.

Place a tomb in "*Sémiramis,*" dare to make the ghost of Ninus appear, let Ninias come out of that tomb with his arms stained with his mother's blood; all that will be allowed you. Respect for antiquity, mythology, the majesty of the subject, the heinousness of the crime, something gloomy and terrible, which breathes through that tragedy from its very opening, carry the spectator, in imagination, far from his age and country; but do not often take such liberties, let them be rare and let them be indispensable; if they are idly lavished, they will make spectators laugh.

The abuse of theatrical action may make tragedy become barbarous. What is then to be done? We should cautiously avoid all rocks; but as it is easier to make a fine decoration than a fine scene, and to direct performers what attitudes to assume than to write well, it is probable that authors will spoil tragedy while they think they are bringing it to perfection.

PARALLEL BETWEEN HORACE, BOILEAU, AND POPE.

The *Encyclopedic Journal,* one of the most curious and instructive of Europe, gives us an account of a parallel between Horace, Boileau, and Pope, written in England; it mentions the verses addressed to the king of Prussia, in which Pope is preferred to the French as well as the Roman poet.

*Quelques traits échappéz d'une utile morale*
*Dans leurs picquans écrits brillent par intervalle;*
*Mais Pope approfondit ce qu'ils ont effleuré:*
*D'un esprit plus hardi, d'un pas plus assuré*
*Il porta le flambeau dans l'abîme de l'être;*
*Et l'homme avec lui seul apprit à se connoître.*

Oft with instructive and with moral lines,
Brightly each finished composition shines;
But Pope, possessed of genius more profound,
What lightly they skimmed over knew to sound,
Light in the abyss of being first he brought;
And man by him to know himself was taught.

These lines are to be found at the beginning of the poem upon the "Law of Nature"; a work at once philosophical and moral, in which poetry reassumes its first intention, namely, that of teaching virtue, the love of our neighbor, and indulgence; and in which the author explains the principles of that universal law which God has implanted in all our hearts. We agree with the author that the "Essay on Man" of the celebrated Pope is an excellent work, and that neither Horace, Boileau, nor any other poet, has produced anything of the kind. Rousseau is the first who made an attempt somewhat similar, in a poem entitled "Nobody Knows Why; an Allegory"; he does his best to explain the system of Plato; but how weak and languishing

is that work! It is neither poetry nor philosophy; there is neither proof nor painting in it.

> Gods and immortals by thy fire inflamed,
> By the same spirit differently framed;
> Thy power endued them, whom it could create
> With a more lively or less subtle heat,
> Just as the bodies are more quick or slow,
> Placed to retard the fires that from them flow;
> Thus by light placed in a gradation due,
> Great king, to fill the mighty void you knew,
> That mighty void which Reason's eye can see
> 'Twixt men and gods, betwixt the gods and thee
> When in that work with every wonder fraught,
> Complete was made the image of thy thought;
> Heaven with the presence of the gods was graced,
> And man on this terrestrial ball was placed;
> Who, like the equator's circle stands between
> The world that's visible and that unseen.

It is no wonder such a poem should have lain in oblivion; it is, as appears by this quotation, a heap of fustian, consisting of improper terms, a concatenation of unmeaning epithets in dry and rugged prose, which the author has turned into rhyme.

Very different from this is Pope's "Essay on Man"; poetry never presented so many great ideas in so few words. It is the plan of Lords Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, carried into execution by the most consummate artist; accordingly it is translated into almost all the languages of Europe. We do not enter into the question whether this complete performance is orthodox; whether even its boldness has not in some measure contributed to its extraordinary sale; whether it does not sap the foundation of the Christian religion, by endeavoring to prove that things are exactly in the state in which they should be; and whether this system does not overturn the dogma of the fall and the Holy Scrip-

tures. We do not profess theology; we leave it to those who do to refute Pope, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Leibnitz, and other great men; we confine ourselves entirely to philosophy and poetry. We presume, with a view of being instructed, to ask how we are to understand this line,

All partial evil universal good.

It is a strange universal good that is composed of the sufferings of each individual! Let him that is able understand this. Did Bolingbroke well understand himself when he digested this system? What is the meaning of this maxim? "Whatever is, is right." Is it true with regard to us? Doubtless it is not. Is it true with regard to God? It is certain that God does not suffer by our ills. What, then, is at the bottom of this Platonic reverie? It is a chaos, like all other systems, but it has been adorned with diamonds.

With regard to the other epistles of Pope, which admit of comparison with those of Horace and Boileau, I would gladly ask, if these two authors, in their satires, ever had recourse to the weapons of which Pope has made use. His polite treatment of Lord Harvey, one of the most amiable men in England, is somewhat extraordinary; this is the passage word for word:

Let Sporus[1] tremble! what, that thing of silk?
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
Yet let me slap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:

[1] Lord Harvey.

So well-bred Spaniards civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns or politics, or tales or lies,
In spite of smut, or rhymes or blasphemies:
His wit all see-saw between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis:
Amphibious thing, not acting either part,
The trifling head or the corrupted heart;
Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the rabbins have expressed,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.

It is true, Pope is discreet enough not to name the lord that he characterizes; he good-naturedly calls him Sporus, which was the name of an infamous prostitute of Nero's; take notice too, that most of these invectives are levelled at the person of Lord Harvey, and that Pope goes so far as to reproach him with its gracefulness. When we take into consideration that he was a little ill-shaped man, deformed both before and behind, who spoke thus, we have a striking instance of the blindness of anger and self-love.

Readers may very likely ask, whether it was Pope or one of the chairmen who carried him that wrote these lines. This bears no resemblance to the style of Boileau. May we not justly conclude that politeness and decency vary in different countries?

To render this difference, which nature and art have made between two neighboring nations, still

more evident, if possible, let us cast our eyes upon a literal translation of a passage in the "Dunciad"; it is in the second book. Dulness had offered a prize for whichever of her favorites should conquer the rest at a race. Two London booksellers are competitors for the prize; one is Lintot, who is somewhat corpulent; the other was Curl, a man rather lighter than his antagonist: they run, and this was the consequence:

> Full in the middle way there stood a lake,
> Which Curl's Corinna chanced that morn to make:
> (Such was her wont at early dawn to drop
> Her evening cates before his neighbor's shop.)
> Here fortuned Curl to slide; loud shout the band,
> And Bernard, Bernard, rings through all the Strand.
> Obscene with filth the miscreant lies bewrayed,
> Fallen in the plash his wickedness had laid.

The picture of Indolence, in "*Le Lutrin,*" is of another kind; but we are told that tastes are not to be disputed.

Another conclusion which we will venture to draw from the comparison of little detached poems with great poems, such as the epic and tragedy, is that they should have their proper rank assigned them. I cannot conceive how an epistle or an ode can be compared to a dramatic piece of merit. Let an epistle, or what is still more easy to compose, a satire, or what is often insipid enough, an ode, be as well written as a tragedy, there is a hundred times more merit in the composition of the latter, and more pleasure in seeing it, than in transcribing or reading commonplace morality; I say commonplace morality; for all that can be said upon moral subjects has been said already. A good moral epistle teaches

us nothing; a well-written ode still less; it may at best amuse those who have a taste for poetry about a quarter of an hour; but to create a subject, to invent an intricate intrigue, and unravel it; to give each person of the drama his proper character, and to support it; to contrive that none of them should enter or make their exits without a reason visible to all the spectators; never to leave the stage empty; to make everyone say what he should say, with elevation but without bombast, with simplicity free from meanness; to compose fine verse which does not discover the poet, but is such as the person who speaks might make if he spoke in verse; this is part of the duty which every author of a tragedy must discharge, upon pain of not succeeding among us. And when he has accomplished all this, he has hitherto done nothing. "Esther" is a piece in which all these conditions are fulfilled; but when it was acted upon the stage, the audience could not endure the representation. A poet should, as it were, hold the hearts of spectators in his hand; he should force tears from the most insensible; he should wring the most obdurate hearts: without terror and pity, tragedy has no existence; and even though you should excite both pity and terror, if with these advantages you fail in the observance of other laws, if your verse is not excellent, you are only a middling writer who have treated a well-chosen subject.

How difficult is a tragedy, and how easy is an epistle or a satire! Who then could presume to place in the same class a Racine and a Boileau? Who can esteem a portrait painter as much as a Raphael?

Can a head by Rembrandt be compared to the picture of the Transfiguration, or that of the Marriage at Cana?

We are well aware that most of the epistles of Boileau are fine, and that they have truth for their foundation, without which nothing is supportable; but with regard to the epistles of Rousseau, what falsehoods are there in the subjects, what contortions in the style! how frequently do they excite disgust and indignation! What is the meaning of his epistle to Marot, in which he attempts to prove that fools only are wicked? How ridiculous is this paradox!

Were Sulla, Catiline, Cæsar, Tiberius, and even Nero, fools? Was the famous duke of Borgia a fool? Need we seek for examples in ancient history? Besides, who can bear the harsh and constrained manner in which this false notion is expressed?

> Though sometimes that a knave has wit men say,
> The matter with attention duly weigh,
> You'll find he has its covering alone,
> And that a mask his folly keeps unknown.

The covering of wit! Good God! was it thus Boileau wrote? Who can endure the epistle to the duke de Noailles, which he has in his latter editions christened, "An Epistle to the Count of C—— "

> Though birth and fame in you combine,
> With titles and with power to shine,
> Although your house on every side
> Is with high honors dignified,
> You are not by those trifles raised,
> 'Tis not for these that you are praised.

This wretched burlesque, this impertinent mixture of the jargon of the sixteenth century and of the language spoken at present, a mixture held in

such contempt by persons of taste, cannot procure the prize for a subject which of itself teaches nothing, means nothing, and is neither useful nor entertaining.

The grand defect which we meet with in all the works of this author is, that we never meet with our own resemblance in his paintings; we in them see nothing which renders man dear to himself, to use the expression of Horace; nothing pleasing, nothing agreeable. This gloomy writer never once spoke to the heart. Most of his epistles turn upon himself, upon his quarrels with his enemies; the public is no way interested in his pitiful concerns; they mind his verses against La Motte no more than his "Rocks of Salisbury"; what is it to them that among those rugged rocks,

> Rocks to that place by magic brought,
> There seven were with such art wrought,
> That they a gate most perfect made,
> Where nature force of art displayed;
> But this was all, for vain it were
> To look for towers or castle there.

Can these shocking lines, and this wretched subject, come in competition with the worst tragedy extant? We are overstocked with poetry: a commodity too common is become a drug. The rule of *"ne quid nimis"*; "not too much," takes place here. The poetry of the theatre, where the nation assembles, is almost the only sort that interests us nowadays; yet new dramatic poems should not be exhibited too often:

> **For moderate use gives relish to delight.**

## A DISCOURSE ON TRAGEDY.

IN A LETTER TO LORD BOLINGBROKE.

My Lord:—I have here dedicated a French work represented at Paris, to an English patron; not because there are not in my own country many men of distinguished parts and judgment, to whom I might have paid that compliment; but because the tragedy of Brutus is as it were a native of England. Your lordship may remember that when I retired to Wandsworth with my friend, Mr. Fakener, that worthy and virtuous citizen, I employed my leisure hours at his house in writing the first act of this piece in English prose, pretty nearly the same as it now stands in French verse. I mentioned it to your lordship several times, and we were both equally surprised that no Englishman had ever treated this subject, which seems peculiarly adapted to your theatre. You encouraged me to pursue a plan which would admit of such noble sentiments; permit me, therefore, my lord, to inscribe this work to your lordship, though not written in your own tongue; to you, my lord,

*Docte sermones utriusque linguæ.*

you, who are able to instruct me in French as well as English; you, who at least have taught me to give my own language that force and energy, which freedom of thought can alone inspire; for the vigorous sentiments of the heart pass insensibly into our expressions, and he who thinks nobly will always speak so.

I must own, my lord, on my return from Eng-

land, where I had passed almost two years in the continual study of your language, I found myself at a loss when I set about a French tragedy. I was accustomed almost to think in English, and perceived that the French idioms did not present themselves to my imagination with that facility that they did formerly; it was like a rivulet, whose current had been turned another way; some time and pains were requisite to make it flow again in its proper channel. I began then to be convinced that to succeed in any art, we must cultivate it all our lives.

What deterred me more than anything from works of this kind were the severe rules of our poetry, and the slavery of rhyme. I regretted that happy liberty which you enjoy of writing tragedy in blank verse; of lengthening out, of shortening almost all your words; of running one verse into another; and, upon occasion, coining new expressions; which are generally adopted, if they sound well, and are useful, and intelligible. "An English poet," said I, "is a freeman, who can subject his language to his genius; while the Frenchman is a slave to rhyme, obliged sometimes to make four verses to express a sentiment that an Englishman can give you in one." An Englishman says what he will; a Frenchman only what he can. One runs along a large and open field, while the other walks in shackles, through a narrow and slippery road; but, in spite of all these reflections and complaints, we can never shake off the yoke of rhyme; it is absolutely essential to French poetry. Our language will not admit of inversions; nor our verses bear to

be run one into another; our syllables can never produce a sensible harmony, by their long or short measures; our cæsuras, and a certain number of feet, would not be sufficient to distinguish prose from verse; rhyme is therefore indispensably necessary; besides, so many of our great masters, who have written in rhyme, such as Corneille, Racine, and Despréaux, have so accustomed our ears to this kind of harmony, that we could never bear any other; and I once more therefore insist upon it, that whoever can be absurd enough to shake off a burden which the great Corneille was obliged to carry, would be looked upon, and with great reason, not as a bold and enterprising genius, striking out into a new road, but as a weak and impotent writer, who had not strength to support himself in the old path.

Some have attempted to give us tragedies in prose; but it is a thing which, I believe, can never succeed. Those who already have much, are seldom contented with a little; and he who says, "I come to lessen your pleasure," will always be a very unwelcome guest to the public. If, in the midst of Paul Veronese or Rubens' pictures, any one should come and place his sketches with a pencil, would he have any right to compare himself with those great artists? We are used at feasts to dancing and singing; would it be enough on these occasions merely for us to walk and speak, only under the pretence that we walked and spoke well, and that it was more easy, and more natural?

It is probable that verse will always be made use of in tragedy, rhymed verse in ours. It is even

to this constraint of rhyme, and the extreme severity of our versification, that we are indebted for the most excellent performances in our language. We require in our rhymes that they should never prejudice the sentiment; that they should never be trivial, nor labored; and are so rigorous as to expect the same purity, and the same exactness in verse, as in prose. We do not permit the least licence; we force our authors to carry all the chains without breaking one link, and at the same time to appear entirely free, and never acknowledge any as poets who have not fulfilled all these conditions.

Such are the reasons why it is more easy to make a hundred verses in any other language than four in French. The example of Abbé Regnier-Desmarias, of the French Academy, and also of the Academy of La Crusca, is a sufficient proof of this. He translated "Anacreon" into Italian with great success; and yet his French verses, with few exceptions, are but very indifferent. It was nearly the same with Ménage. How many of our men of genius have made excellent Latin verses, and written others in their own language which were insufferable.

Many disputes have I had in England about our versification: what reproaches have I heard from the learned bishop of Rochester[1] for this childish constraint, which, he used to say, we ridiculously laid upon ourselves, out of mere wantonness and levity: but depend on it, my lord, the more a stranger knows of our language, the sooner will he reconcile himself to that rhyme which is at first so formidable

[1] The celebrated Dr. Atterbury.

to him. It is not only necessary to our tragedies, but is even an ornament to our comedies themselves. A good thing in verse is more easily retained: the various pictures of human life will be always more striking in verse—when a Frenchman says verse, he always means rhyme—and we have comedies in prose, by the celebrated Molière, which we have been obliged to put into verse after his death, and which are never played but in their new dress.

Not daring, therefore, my lord, to hazard on the French theatre that kind of verse which is used in Italy and in England, I have endeavored at least to transplant into our scene some of the beauties of yours; at the same time I am sufficiently satisfied, that the English theatre is extremely defective. I have heard you say you have not one good tragedy; but to make you amends, in those wild pieces which you have, there are some admirable scenes. Hitherto there has been wanting, in all the tragic authors of your nation, that purity, that regular conduct, that decorum in the action and style, and all those strokes of art which have established the reputation of the French theatre since the time of the great Corneille: though, at the same time, it must be acknowledged, that your most irregular pieces have very great merit with regard to the action.

We have in France some tragedies in high repute, which are rather conversations than the representation of an event. An Italian author, in a letter on the theatres, writes thus to me: *"Un cretico del nostro 'Pastor Fido' disso che quel componimento era un riassunto di bellissimi madrigali; credo, se vivesse,*

*che direbbe delle tragedie Francese che sono un riassunto di belle elegie, e sontuosi epitalami.*" [1]

I am afraid there is too much truth in what my Italian friend says; our excessive delicacy obliges us frequently to put into narration, what we would gladly have brought before the eyes of the spectator; but we are afraid to hazard on the scene new spectacles, before a people accustomed to turn into ridicule everything which they are not used to.

The place where our comedies are acted, and the abuses which have crept into it, are another cause of that dryness which appears in some of our pieces. The benches on the stage, appropriated to the spectators, confine the scene, and make all action almost impracticable; and this is the reason why the decorations, so highly recommended by the ancients, are with us seldom well adapted to the piece: and above all, it prevents the actors from passing out of one apartment into the other in sight of the spectators; as was the sensible practice of the Greeks and Romans, to preserve at once unity of place and probability.

How, for instance, could we dare, on our theatre, to bring on the ghost of Pompey, or the genius of Brutus, among a crowd of young fellows who seldom look upon the most serious things but with the view of showing their wit by a *bon mot* on the occasion? How could we produce before them the body of Marcus, and Cato, his father, crying out:

[1] A critic on our "Pastor Fido" says that work is nothing but a collection of the most beautiful madrigals. I believe, if he were now living, he would say of the French tragedies, that they were a collection of fine elegies, and sounding epithalamiums.

> Who would not be that youth ? what pity is it
> That we can die but once to serve our country !
> Why mourn you thus ? let not a private loss
> Afflict your hearts; 'tis Rome requires our tears;
> The mistress of the world, the seat of empire,
> The nurse of heroes, the delight of gods,
> That humbled the proud tyrants of the earth
> And set the nations free. Rome is no more.
> O liberty ! O virtue ! O my country !

This is what the late Mr. Addison took the liberty to do at London. This "Cato" was translated into Italian, and played in several parts of Italy: but if we were to hazard such a spectacle at Paris, you would hear the parterre roaring out, and observe the women turning their heads away.

You cannot imagine how far we carry this delicacy. The author of our tragedy of "Manlius" took his subject from the English work by Otway, called, "Venice Preserved." The plot is taken from the history of the conspiracy of Marquis de Bedemar, written by Abbé de St. Rèal. Permit me to observe, by the way, that this short piece of history is much superior both to Otway's piece, and our own "Manlius." First, you may remark the prejudice that obliged the French author to disguise a known fact under Roman names, whilst the English writer made use of the real ones. The London theatre saw nothing ridiculous in a Spanish ambassador's being called Bedemar, or the conspirators Jaffier, Pierre, and Elliot: this alone in France would have been sufficient to ruin the performance. But Otway assembles the conspirators; Regnaud makes them all take their oaths; assigns to each his post; appoints the hour to begin the massacre; and every now and then casts an eye of diffidence and suspicion on Jaffier, whom he

mistrusts. He makes a pathetic address to them all, which is translated word for word from Saint-Réal: *"Jamais repos si profonde ne précéda un trouble si grand."*

But what has the French author done? afraid to produce so many persons on the stage, he only relates by Renaud, under the name of Rutilus, an inconsiderable part of that speech which he tells us he had made to the conspirators. One may perceive by this circumstance alone, how superior the English scene is to the French, however faulty Otway's piece may be in every other respect.

With what pleasure have I seen at London your tragedy of Julius Cæsar, which for these hundred and fifty years past has been the delight of your nation! not that I approve the barbarous irregularities which it abounds with; it only astonishes me, that there are not many more in a work written in an age of ignorance, by a man who did not even understand Latin, and had no instructor but his own genius: and yet, among so many gross faults, with what rapture did I behold Brutus, holding in his hand a dagger, still wet with the blood of Cæsar, assemble the Roman people, and thus harangue them from the tribunal:

"Romans, countrymen, and friends, if there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Cæsar was no less than his. If then that friend demand, why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves, than

that Cæsar were dead, to live all free men? As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honor him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? if any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? if any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? if any, speak, for him have I offended.

"*All.* None, Brutus, none.

"*Brutus.* Then none have I offended. Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony; who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not. With this I depart, that as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

"*All.* Live, Brutus, live."

After this scene Antony comes to excite the compassion of those very Romans whom Brutus had just before inspired with his own rigor and barbarity. Antony, by an artful discourse, leads back as it were insensibly these haughty spirits, and when he sees them softened a little, shows them the body of Cæsar; and making use of the most pathetic figures of rhetoric, excites them to sedition and revenge. The French, perhaps, would never suffer on their stage a chorus composed of Roman artisans and plebeians; would never permit the bleeding body of Cæsar to be exposed in public; or the people to be excited to rebellion by a harangue from the tribunal; custom

alone, who is the queen of this world, can change the taste of nations, and make the objects of our aversion pleasing and agreeable.

The Greeks produced spectacles on the stage that appear not less shocking and absurd to us. Hippolytus, bruised with his fall, comes on to count his wounds, and make hideous lamentations. Philoctetes falls into a trance, occasioned by the violence of his pains, and the black blood flows from his wound. Œdipus, covered with blood that drops from the remaining part of his eyes, which he had been just tearing out, complains both of gods and men. We hear the shrieks of Clytemnestra, murdered by her own son; and Electra cries out from the stage: "Strike, spare her not, she did not spare our father." Prometheus is fastened to a rock, by nails driven into his arms and stomach. The furies answer the bloody ghost of Clytemnestra by horrid and inarticulate noises. In short, many of the Greek tragedies are filled with terror of this kind, that is to the last degree extravagant. The Greek tragedians, in other respects superior to the English, were certainly wrong in often mistaking horror for terror; and the disgusting and incredible for the tragic and the marvellous. The art was in its infancy in Athens in the time of Æschylus, as at London in the time of Shakespeare; but amidst all the faults, both of the Greek and English poets, we find singular beauties, and the true pathetic; and if any of my countrymen, who have no other knowledge of the manners and tragedies of their neighbors but what they get from translations and hearsays, condemn them with-

out restriction, they are, in my opinion, like so many blind men, who should assure us that a rose could not have lively colors, because they felt the thorns at the ends of their fingers: but if the Greeks and you have both passed the bounds of decorum, and the English more particularly abound in the frightful instead of the terrible, we, on the other hand, as overscrupulous as you have been rash, for fear of going too far, stop too short, and very often fail of reaching the tragic, for fear of going beyond it.

I am far from proposing that the stage should be a scene of bloodshed, as it is in Shakespeare, and many of his successors, who, without his genius, have imitated his faults; but I dare believe that there are some certain circumstances and situations, which at present appear shocking and disgusting to a French audience, that, if well conducted, represented with art, and above all softened by the charms of good verse, might give us a species of pleasure we are as yet unacquainted with, which notwithstanding may certainly be attained.

*Il n'est point de serpent ni de monstre odieux*
*Qui par l'art imité ne puisse plaire aux yeux.*[1]

At least I should wish to be informed why our heroes and heroines should be permitted to kill themselves and nobody else: is the scene less bloody by the death of Athaliah, who stabs herself for her lover, than it would be by the murder of Cæsar? And if the sight of Cato's son, brought in dead before his

[1] There is no serpent, or odious monster, but if well imitated by art, may be made agreeable to the eye.
The French lines are taken from Boileau's "Art of Poetry."

father, gives that old Roman an opportunity of making an excellent speech on the occasion; if this part of "Cato" was admired both in England and in Italy, even by the greatest partisans of French decorum; if the most delicate of the fair sex were not in the least shocked at it; why may not the French bring themselves to it by use? Is not nature the same in all mankind?

All these laws of banishing murder from the stage; of not suffering more than three persons to speak, are such as, in my opinion, might admit of some exceptions among us, as they did among the Greeks. It is not with the rules of decorum, that are always a little arbitrary, as it is with the fundamental laws of the theatre, which are the three unities; it would be a mark of weakness and sterility to extend an action beyond that degree of space and time suitable to it. Ask any man, who has crowded too many events into his piece, what is the reason of this fault, and, if he has sincerity enough, he will fairly confess, that he had not sufficient genius to fill up his performance with a single action: and if he takes up two days, and places his scene in two different places, you may take it for granted, it is because he has not skill enough to confine his plan within the limits of three hours, or bring it into the walls of a palace, as probability requires he should. But it is quite another thing with regard to hazarding a horrible spectacle on the stage; this would not in the least shock probability: a boldness like this, far from implying any weakness in the author, would, on the contrary, demand a great genius to give his verses

true grandeur in an action, which, without sublimity of style, would appear savage and disgusting.

This was what our great Corneille once attempted in his *"Rodogune."* He brings upon the stage a mother, who, in the presence of an ambassador and the whole court, wants to poison her son and her daughter-in-law, after having killed her other son with her own hand. She presents them the poisoned cup, and on their refusing to taste it, occasioned by their suspicions of her, drinks it herself, and dies by the poison which she had designed for them. Strokes so terrible as these should be very rare; it is not every one who should dare to strike them. Such novelties require great circumspection, and a masterly hand in the execution. The English themselves allow that Shakespeare, for example, was the only poet who could call up ghosts, and make them speak with success.

Within that circle none durst move but he.

The more majestic and full of terror a theatrical action is, the more insipid would it become, if it were often repeated; in the same manner as details of battles, which, being in their own nature everything that is terrible, become dry and tedious, by appearing often in history. The only piece of Racine, where there is any spectacle, is his masterpiece, *"Athalie"*; there we see a child on the throne, his nurse and the priests attending him, a queen who commands her soldiers to massacre him, and the Levites running to take up arms in his defence: the whole of this action is pathetic; and yet, if the style was not so too, it would appear childish and ridiculous.

The more we strike the eye with splendid appearances, the stronger obligation do we lay ourselves under of supporting them by sublimity of diction; otherwise the writer will only be considered as a decorator, and not as a tragic poet. It is nearly thirty years since the tragedy of "*Montezuma*" was represented at Paris; the scene opened with a spectacle entirely new: a palace in a magnificent but barbarous taste; Montezuma in a dress very singular and uncommon; at the end of the stage a number of his slaves, armed with bows and arrows according to the custom of their country; round the king were eight grandees of his court prostrate on the earth, with their faces to the ground; Montezuma begins the piece with these words:

> Arise; your king permits you on this day
> To look on, and to speak to him.

The spectacle charmed the spectators, but nothing else gave the least pleasure throughout the whole tragedy.

With regard to myself I must own, it was not without fear that I introduced on our stage the Roman senate in scarlet robes delivering their opinions. I recollected, that when I brought into my "*Œdipe*" a chorus of Thebans, saying:

> Strike, strike ye gods, O death deliver us,
> And we will thank you for the boon.

The parterre, instead of being struck with the pathetic in this passage, only felt the absurdity, if any such there were, of putting these verses into the mouths of raw actors, not much used to choruses, and immediately set up a loud laugh. This pre-

vented me from making the senators in Brutus speak, when Titus is accused before them, of heightening the terror of the incident by expressing the astonishment and grief of these reverend fathers of their country, who, no doubt, should have signified their surprise in another manner than by dumb show: but they did not do even so much as this.

The English are more fond of action than we are, and speak more to the eye; the French give more attention to elegance, harmony, and the charms of verse. It is certainly more difficult to write well than to bring upon the stage assassinations, wheels, mechanical powers, ghosts, and sorcerers. The tragedy of *"Cato,"* which reflects so much honor on Mr. Addison, your successor in the ministry, I have heard you say, owes its great reputation to its fine poetry; that is to say, to just and noble sentiments expressed in harmonious verses. It is these detached beauties that support poetical performances, and hand them down to posterity. It is only a peculiar manner of saying common things; it is the art of embellishing by diction what all men think and feel that constitutes the true poet. There are no refined or strained sentiments, no romantic adventures in the fourth book of Virgil; all is natural; and yet it is the highest effort of human genius. M. Racine is superior to all those who have said the same things as himself only because he has said them better: and Corneille is never truly great, except when he expresses himself as well as he thinks. Let us remember this precept of Despréaux's.

*Et que tout ce qu'il dit, facile à retenir,*
*De son ouvrage en vous laisse un long souvenir.*[1]

This is greatly wanting in many of our dramatic performances, which the art of an actor, or the figure and voice of an actress, have carried off with success on our stage. How many ill-written pieces have been acted oftener than *"Cinna"* and *"Britannicus,"* though nobody ever retained two lines of any of these poor pieces, and at the same time *"Britannicus"* and *"Cinna"* are got by heart. In vain did the *"Regulus"* of Pradon draw tears from the spectators by some moving incidents: the work itself, with all those that resemble it, have sunk into contempt, whilst the authors pay themselves a thousand compliments in their prefaces to them.

Some judicious critics will perhaps ask me, why I brought love into the tragedy of *"Junius Brutus"*; and why I have mingled that passion with the austere virtue of a Roman senate, and the political intrigues of an ambassador: our nation is reproached for enervating the scene by too much tenderness; and the English, at least for this last age, have deserved the same censure; or you have always followed a little our modes, and our vices: but will you permit me to give you my opinion on this head?

To exact love in every tragedy shows an effeminate taste; and entirely to proscribe and banish it from the theatre is equally unreasonable and ridiculous. The stage, either in tragedy or comedy, is a lively picture of the human passions: one perhaps

[1] Let everything he says be easy to retain, that it may leave with you a long remembrance of the work.
For the French lines see Boileau's "Art of Poetry."

represents the ambition of a prince, the other ridicules the vanity of a citizen. Here you laugh at the coquetry and intrigues of a citizen's lady; there you weep the unhappy passion of Phædra: love amuses you in a romance, or charms you in the "Dido" of Virgil. Love in a tragedy is not more essentially a fault, than it is in the "Æneid." In short, it is never blamable, but when it is brought in unseasonably, or treated inartistically.

The Greeks seldom ventured to bring this passion on the stage of Athens; first, because their tragedies generally turning on subjects of terror, the minds of the spectators were biassed as it were in favor of that particular species; and, secondly, because the women at that time led a much more retired life than ours do, and consequently the language of love, not being as it is now the subject of every conversation, the poets had less inducement to treat a passion, which it is most difficult to paint on account of that very delicate management which it requires. Another reason, which I own weighs greatly with me, was, that they had no actresses, the women's parts being always played by men in masks. Love from their mouths would perhaps have appeared ridiculous.

In London and Paris it is quite another thing, where it must be acknowledged the authors would have very ill understood their own interests, and must have known little of their audience, to have made their Oldfields, Duclos, and Lecouvreur talk of nothing but ambition and politics.

But the misfortune is that love, with our heroes

of the theatre, is seldom anything more than gallantry; and with you it sometimes degenerates into lewdness and debauchery. In our "Alcibiades," a piece greatly followed but poorly written, and therefore at present in very little esteem, we admired for a long time these bad verses, which were repeated in a soft and persuasive tone by the Æsopus of the last age.

> Fired with a real passion, when I saw
> The lovely fair, and falling at her feet,
> In her soft eyes, that sparkled with desire,
> Or with a timid lustre glanced upon me,
> Beheld the mutual flame that in her breast
> Responsive glowed, what raptures filled my soul?
> From those blessed minutes only have I learned
> That man may taste of perfect happiness.

In your "Venice Preserved," old Regnaud wants to debauch the wife of Jaffier; she complains of it in terms rather indecent, and goes so far as to say he came to her unbuttoned.

To render love worthy of the tragic scene, it ought to arise naturally from the business of the piece, and not be brought in by mere force, only to fill up a vacancy, as it generally does in your tragedies, and in ours, which are both of them too long: it should be a passion entirely tragical, considered as a weakness, and opposed by remorse; it should either lead to misfortunes or to crimes, to convince us how dangerous it is; or it should be subdued by virtue, to show us that it is not invincible. In all other cases, it is no more than the love of an eclogue, or a comedy.

You, my lord, must decide whether I have fulfilled any of these conditions; but I hope that, above all, your friends will be so candid as not to judge of the

genius and taste of our nation by this discourse, or by the tragedy which I have sent you with it. I am, perhaps, one of those who cultivate the *belles-lettres* in France with the least success, and if the sentiments which I have here submitted to your judgment are disapproved, I and I only, deserve to be censured for them.

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## THE RELIGION OF THE QUAKERS.

Being of opinion that the doctrine and history of so extraordinary a sect as the Quakers were very well deserving the curiosity of every thinking man, I resolved to make myself acquainted with them, and for that purpose made a visit to one of the most eminent of that sect in England, who, after having been in trade for thirty years, had the wisdom to prescribe limits to his fortune, and to his desires, and withdrew to a small but pleasant retirement in the country, not many miles from London. Here it was that I made him my visit. His house was small, but neatly built, and with no other ornaments but those of decency and convenience. The Quaker himself was a hale, ruddy-complexioned old man, who had never suffered from sickness, because he had always been a stranger to passions and intemperance. I never in my life saw any one have a more noble, or a more engaging aspect. He was dressed after the fashion of those of his persuasion, in a plain coat, without plaits in the side, or buttons on the pockets and sleeves; and he wore a beaver hat, the brim of which flapped downward like those of our clergy.

He advanced toward me without moving his hat, or making the least inclination of his body; but there appeared more real politeness in the open, humane air of his countenance, than in drawing one leg behind the other, and carrying that in the hand which is made to be worn on the head. "Friend," said he, "I perceive thou art a stranger, if I can do thee any service thou hast only to let me know it." "Sir," I replied, bowing my body, and sliding one leg toward him, as is the custom with us, "I flatter myself that my curiosity, which you will allow to be just, will not give you any offence, and that you will do me the honor to inform me of the particulars of your religion." "The people of thy country," answered the Quaker, "are too full of their bows and their compliments; but I never yet met with one of them who had so much curiosity as thyself. Come in and let us dine first together." I still continued to make some silly compliments, it not being easy to disengage at once oneself from habits we have been long accustomed to; and after taking part of a frugal meal, which began and ended with a prayer to God, I began to put questions to my plain host.

I opened with that which good Catholics have more than once made to Huguenots. "My dear sir," said I, "were you ever baptized?" "No, friend," replied the Quaker, "nor any of my brethren." "Zounds!" said I to him, "you are not Christians then!" "Friend," replied the old man, in a soft tone of voice, "do not swear; we are Christians, but we do not think that sprinkling a few drops of water on a child's head makes him a Christian." "My God!"

exclaimed I, shocked at his impiety, "have you then forgotten that Christ was baptized by St. John?" "Friend," replied the mild Quaker, "once again, do not swear. Christ was baptized by John, but He Himself never baptized any one; now we profess ourselves disciples of Christ, and not of John." "Mercy on us," cried I, "what a fine subject you would be for the holy inquisitor! In the name of God, my good old man, let me baptize you." "Were that all," replied he very gravely, "we would submit cheerfully to be baptized, purely in compliance with thy weakness; for we do not condemn any person who uses that rite; but, on the other hand, we think that those who profess a religion of so holy and spiritual a nature as that of Christ, ought to abstain to the utmost of their power from Jewish ceremonies."

"Why, there again!" said I, "baptism a Jewish ceremony!" "Yes, my friend," said he, "and so truly Jewish, that many Jews use the baptism of John to this day. Peruse ancient authors, and they will show thee that John only revived this practice, and that it was in use among the Hebrews long before his time, the same as the pilgrimage to Mecca was among the Ishmaelites. Jesus indeed submitted to be baptized of John, in the like manner as He had undergone circumcision; but both the one and the other ceremony were to end in the baptism of Christ, that baptism of the spirit, that ablution of the soul which is the salvation of mankind. Thus the forerunner John said, 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to

bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' St. Paul likewise, the great apostle of the Gentiles, writes thus to the Corinthians: 'Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel.' Accordingly Paul never baptized but two persons with water, and that against his inclination. He circumcised his disciple, Timothy; and the other apostles circumcised all those who were desirous of it. Art thou circumcised?" added he. "I really have not that honor," replied I. "Wilt thou, friend?" replied the Quaker; "thou art a Christian without being circumcised, and I am one without being baptized."

Thus did my pious host make a false but very specious application of three or four passages of Holy Writ, which seemed to favor the tenets of his sect; but at the same time forgot, very sincerely, above a hundred others that directly overturned them. I resolved not to contend with him, as there is nothing to be gained by arguing with an enthusiast: one should never pretend to reveal to a lover his mistress' faults, to a lawyer the weakness of one's cause, nor force the truth upon a fanatic. Accordingly I proceeded to other questions.

"Pray," said I to him, "in what manner do you communicate?" "We have no such ceremony among us," replied he. "How!" said I, "have you no communion?" "No," answered he; "no other than that of hearts." He then began again to quote his texts of Scripture, and read me a very curious lecture against the sacrament; and harangued with a tone of inspiration to prove that the sacraments were mere human inventions, and that the word "sacra-

ment" was not once mentioned in the Scripture. "I must ask thy excuse," said he, "for my ignorance; for I am sensible I have not employed a hundredth part of the arguments that might be made use of, to prove the truth of our religion: but thou mayest see them all amply unfolded in the 'Exposition of Our Faith,' written by Robert Barclay. It is one of the best books that ever came from the hand of man; our very adversaries confess it is dangerous, and that is sufficient alone to prove its goodness." I promised to peruse this piece; and my Quaker thought he had already made a convert.

He then proceeded to give me a brief account of certain singularities, which make this sect the contempt of others. "Confess," said he, "that it was very difficult for thee to refrain from laughing, when I answered all thy compliments without uncovering my head, and at the same time spoke to thee only with 'thee' and 'thou.' However, thou appearest to me too well read not to know, that, in Christ's time, no nation was so ridiculous as to use the plural for the singular. They said to Augustus Cæsar himself, 'I love thee', 'I beseech thee', 'I thank thee'; and he would not even suffer himself to be called 'domine'; 'sir.' It was not till long after his time that men took the ridiculous notion of having themselves called 'you', instead of 'thou', as if they were double, and usurped the impertinent titles of 'lordship', 'eminence', and 'holiness', which poor reptiles bestow on other reptiles like themselves; assuring them, that they are, 'with the most profound respect', and an infamous falsehood, their 'most obedient humble serv-

ants'. It is the more effectually to secure ourselves against this shameful traffic of lies and flattery, that we 'thee' and 'thou' a king, with the same freedom as we do his meanest servant; and salute no person, as owing mankind only charity, and respect only to the laws.

"We dress also differently from others, and this purely that it may be a perpetual warning to us not to imitate them. While others pride themselves on wearing the badges of their several dignities, we confine ourselves to those of Christian humility. We shun all the assemblies of the gay, we avoid places of diversions of all kinds, and carefully abstain from gaming; for wretched would be our state, indeed, were we to fill with such levities the heart that ought to be the habitation of God. We never swear, not even in a court of justice; being of opinion, that the name of the Most High ought not to be prostituted in the frivolous contests between man and man. When we are obliged to appear before a magistrate, upon the concerns of others—for lawsuits are unknown among the Friends—we affirm the truth by our 'yea' or 'nay,' and they believe us on our simple affirmation, while other Christians are daily perjuring themselves on the blessed Gospels. We never take up arms, not that we are fearful of death; on the contrary, we bless the instant that unites us to the Being of beings. The reason is, that we are neither wolves, tigers, nor mastiffs, but men and Christians. Our God, who has commanded us to love our enemies, and to suffer without repining, can certainly not order us to cross the seas, and cut the

throats of our fellow-creatures, as often as murderers, clothed in scarlet, and wearing caps two feet high, enlist peaceful citizens by a noise made with two sticks on an ass' skin extended. And when, after the gaining of a battle, all London blazes with illuminations, when the air glows with fireworks, and a noise is heard of thanksgivings, of bells, of organs, and of cannon, we groan in silence for the cruel havoc which occasions these public rejoicings."

Such was the substance of the conversation I had with this very singular person;[1] and I was greatly surprised when, the Sunday following, he came to take me with him to one of their meetings. There are several of these in London; but that to which

[1] The name of this Quaker was Andrew Pit; and the whole of the preceding chapter is strictly true, except in a very few circumstances. Andrew Pit lately wrote to the author, to complain that he had a little amplified facts, assuring him at the same time that God was greatly offended at his having diverted himself and his readers at the expense of the Quakers.

In consequence of the first publication of these letters concerning the Quakers, an answer was written and sent to the author by one of that people. The design of it was to give him an opportunity of correcting, in the subsequent editions, the errors of his first; but these letters having been since published without any such correction, the answer was printed, that every reader might judge for himself.

The Quakers complain that Voltaire mistook his talents when he meddled with religion; the facetious levity of his expression being quite unsuitable to the serious gravity of such a subject. The vivacity of his style, and the delicacy of his diction, say they, are very pleasant and entertaining; but *errors* in *fact*, so clad, are the more dangerous; the frequency of which, in his third and fourth letters, bespeaks him not well read in the history he undertook to write. For a refutation of those errors, and as the means of obviating the author's misrepresentations of the Quakers, the curious reader is referred to the letter above mentioned, and to Penn's "Rise and Progress of People Called Quakers," printed by L. Hinde in George-Yard, Lombard street.

he carried me stands near the famous pillar called the Monument. The brethren were already assembled when I entered with my guide. There might be about four hundred men and three hundred women in the place. The women hid their faces with their hoods, and the men were covered with their broad-brimmed hats. All were sitting, and there was a universal silence amongst them. I passed through the midst of them; but not one lifted up his eyes to look at me. This silence lasted a quarter of an hour; when at last an old man rose up, took off his hat, and after making a number of wry faces, and groaning in a most lamentable manner, he, half-mouthing, half snuffling, threw out a heap of unaccountable stuff—taken, as he thought, from the Gospel—which neither himself nor any of his auditors understood. When this religious buffoon had ended his curious soliloquy, and the assembly broke up, very much edified, and very stupid, I asked my guide how it was possible the judicious part of them could suffer such incoherent prating? "We are obliged," said he, "to suffer it, because no one knows, when a brother rises up to hold forth, whether he will be moved by the spirit or by folly. In this uncertainty, we listen patiently to every one. We even allow our women to speak in public; two or three of them are often inspired at the same time, and then a most charming noise is heard in the Lord's house." "You have no priests, then?" said I. "No, no, friend," replied the Quaker; "heaven make us thankful!" Then opening one of the books of their sect, he read the following words in an emphatic tone: "'God for-

bid we should presume to ordain any one to receive the Holy Spirit on the Lord's day, in exclusion to the rest of the faithful!' Thanks to the Almighty, we are the only people upon earth that have no priests! Wouldst thou deprive us of so happy a distinction? Wherefore should we abandon our child to hireling nurses, when we ourselves have milk enough to nourish it? These mercenary creatures would quickly domineer in our houses, and oppress both the mother and the child. God has said, 'You have received freely, give as freely.' Shall we, after this injunction, barter, as it were, the Gospel; sell the Holy Spirit, and make of an assembly of Christians a mere shop of traders? We do not give money to a set of men, clothed in black, to assist our poor, to bury our dead, or to preach to the brethren; these holy offices are held in too high esteem by us to entrust them to others." "But how," said I, with some warmth; "how can you pretend to know whether your discourse is really inspired by the Almighty?" "Whosoever," replied my friend, "shall implore Christ to enlighten him, and shall publish the truths contained in the Gospel, of which he inwardly feels, such a one may be assured that he is inspired by the Lord. He then overwhelmed me with a multitude of Scripture quotations, which proved, as he imagined, that there is no such thing as Christianity, without an immediate revelation; and added these remarkable words: "When thou movest one of thy limbs, is it moved by thy own power? Certainly not; for this limb is often liable to involuntary motions; consequently He who created thy body gives motion to this earthy

tabernacle. Or are the several ideas, of which thy soul receives the impression, of thy own formation? Still less so; for they come upon thee whether thou wilt or no, consequently thou receivest thy ideas from Him who created thy soul. But as He leaves thy heart at full liberty, He gives thy mind such ideas as thy heart may deserve; if thou livest in God, thou actest and thinkest in God. After this, thou needest but open thine eyes to that light which enlightens all mankind, and then thou wilt perceive the truth, and make others perceive it." "Why, this," said I, "is our Malebranche's doctrine to a tittle." "I am acquainted with thy Malebranche," said he; "he had something of the Quaker in him; but he was not enough so."

These are the main particulars that I have been able to gather, concerning the doctrine of the Quakers. In the ensuing pages you will find some account of their history, which is still more singular than their opinions.

You have already heard that the Quakers date their epoch from Christ, who, according to them, was the first Quaker. Religion, say they, was corrupted almost immediately after His death, and remained in that state of corruption about sixteen hundred years. But there were always a few of the faithful concealed in the world, who carefully preserved the sacred fire, which was extinguished in all but themselves; till at length this light shone out in England in 1642.

It was at the time when Great Britain was distracted by intestine wars, which three or four sects

had raised in the name of God, that one George Fox, a native of Leicestershire, and son of a silk-weaver, took it into his head to preach the Word, and, as he pretended, with all the requisites of a true apostle; that is, without being able either to read or write. He was a young man, about twenty-five years of age, of irreproachable manners, and religiously mad. He was clad in leather from head to foot, and travelled from one village to another, exclaiming against the war and the clergy. Had he confined his invectives to the military only, he would have had nothing to fear; but he inveighed against churchmen. Fox was seized at Derby, and being carried before a justice of peace, he stood with his leathern hat on; upon which an officer gave him a great box on the ear, and cried to him, "You unmannerly rascal, don't you know you are to appear uncovered before his worship?" Fox very deliberately presented his other cheek to the officer, and begged him to give him another box on the ear for God's sake. The justice would have had him sworn before he put any questions to him; but Fox refused, saying, "Friend, know that I never swear." The justice, finding himself "thee'd" and "thou'd" by him, and enraged at his insolence, ordered him to the house of correction, there to be whipped. Fox returned thanks to the Lord all the way he went to prison, where the justice's orders were executed with great severity. Those who whipped him were greatly surprised to hear this enthusiast beseech them to give him a few more lashes, for the good of his soul. These gentlemen did not wait for many entreaties: Mr. Fox

had his dose doubled, for which he thanked them very cordially, and then began to hold forth. At first the attendants began laughing; but they afterward listened to him; and as enthusiasm is a catching distemper, many were persuaded, and those who had scourged him became his disciples. Being afterward set at liberty, he went up and down the country, with a dozen proselytes at his heels, declaiming against the clergy, and receiving flagellations from time to time. One day being set in the pillory, he made so moving a harangue to the crowd, that fifty of the auditors became his converts; and he won so much over the rest, that they tumultuously pulled his head out of the hole, and then went in a body to search for the Church of England clergyman who had been chiefly instrumental in bringing him to this punishment, and set him on the same pillory where Fox had stood.

Fox had the boldness to make converts of some of Oliver Cromwell's soldiers, who immediately quitted the service, and refused to take the oaths. Oliver, having as great a contempt for a sect which would not fight as Pope Sixtus V. had for another sect, *dove non si chiavava,* began to persecute these new converts. The prisons were crowded with them; but persecution seldom has any other effect than to increase the number of proselytes. They came forth from their confinement more full of zeal than ever, and followed by their jailers, whom they had converted. But what contributed chiefly to the spreading of this sect were the following circumstances: Fox thought himself inspired, and was therefore of

opinion, that he must speak in a manner different from the rest of mankind: upon which he began to writhe his body, to screw up the muscles of his face, to hold in his breath, and to exhale it again in a forcible manner, insomuch that the priestess of the Delphic god could not have acted her part to better advantage. Inspiration soon became so habitual to him, that he could scarcely deliver himself in any other manner. This was the first gift he communicated to his disciples: these copied their master closely in his grimaces and contortions, and shook from head to foot at the instant of inspiration; and hence they got the name of Quakers. The vulgar, ever the dupes of novelty, amused themselves with mimicking these people, trembled, spoke through the nose, quaked, and fancied themselves inspired by the Holy Ghost. They only lacked a few miracles, and those they wrought.

This new patriarch Fox said one day to a justice of peace, before a large assembly of people. "Friend, take care what thou dost; God will soon punish thee for persecuting his saints." This magistrate, being one who besotted himself every day with bad beer and brandy, died of apoplexy two days after; just as he had signed a mittimus for imprisoning some Quakers. The sudden death of this justice was not ascribed to his intemperance; but was universally looked upon as the effect of the holy man's predictions; so that this accident made more Quakers than a thousand sermons and as many shaking fits would have done. Cromwell, finding them increase daily, was willing to bring them over to his party, and

for that purpose tried bribery; however, he found them incorruptible, which made him one day declare that this was the only religion he had ever met with that could resist the charms of gold.

The Quakers suffered several persecutions under Charles II.; not upon a religious account, but for refusing to pay the tithes, for "theeing" and "thouing" the magistrates, and for refusing to take the oaths enacted by the laws.

At length Robert Barclay, a native of Scotland, presented to the king, in 1675, his "Apology for the Quakers"; a work as well drawn up as the subject could possibly admit. The dedication to Charles II., instead of being filled with mean, flattering encomiums, abounds with bold truths and the wisest counsels. "Thou hast tasted," says he to the king, at the close of his "Epistle Dedicatory," "of prosperity and adversity: thou hast been driven out of the country over which thou now reignest, and from the throne on which thou sittest: thou hast groaned beneath the yoke of oppression; therefore hast thou reason to know how hateful the oppressor is both to God and man. If, after all these warnings and advertisements, thou dost not turn unto the Lord, with all thy heart; but forget Him who remembered thee in thy distress, and give thyself up to follow lust and vanity, surely great will be thy guilt, and bitter thy condemnation. Instead of listening to the flatterers about thee, hearken only to the voice that is within thee, which never flatters. I am thy faithful friend and servant, Robert Barclay."

The most surprising circumstance is that this

letter, though written by an obscure person, was so happy in its effect as to put a stop to the persecution.

About this time appeared the illustrious William Penn, who established the power of the Quakers in America, and would have rendered them respectable in the eyes of the Europeans, if mankind could respect virtue when appearing in the shape of folly. This man was the only son of Vice-Admiral Penn, favorite of the duke of York, afterward King James II.

William Penn, when only fifteen years of age, chanced to meet a Quaker in Oxford, where he was then following his studies. This Quaker made a proselyte of him; and our young man, being naturally sprightly and eloquent, having a very winning aspect and engaging carriage, soon gained over some of his companions and intimates, and in a short time formed a society of young Quakers, who met at his house; so that at the age of sixteen he found himself at the head of a sect. Having left college, at his return home to the vice-admiral, his father, instead of kneeling to ask his blessing, as is the custom with the English, he went up to him with his hat on, and accosted him thus: "Friend, I am glad to see thee in good health." The vice-admiral thought his son crazy; but soon discovered he was a Quaker. He then employed every method that prudence could suggest to engage him to behave and act like other people. The youth answered his father only with repeated exhortations to turn Quaker also. After much altercation, his father

confined himself to this single request, that he would wait on the king and the duke of York with his hat under his arm, and that he would not "thee" and "thou" them. William answered that his conscience would not permit him to do these things. This exasperated his father to such a degree that he turned him out of doors. Young Penn gave God thanks that he permitted him to suffer so early in His cause, and went into the city, where he held forth, and made a great number of converts; and being young, handsome, and of a graceful figure, both court and city ladies flocked very devoutly to hear him. The patriarch Fox, hearing of his great reputation, came to London—notwithstanding the length of the journey—purposely to see and converse with him. They both agreed to go upon missions into foreign countries; and accordingly they embarked for Holland, after having left a sufficient number of laborers to take care of the London vineyard.

Their labors met with all the success they could wish in Amsterdam; but a circumstance which reflected the greatest honor on them, and at the same time put their humility to the strongest test, was the reception they met from the princess Palatine, Elizabeth, aunt of George I. of Great Britain, a lady conspicuous for her genius and knowledge, and to whom Descartes had dedicated his "Philosophical Romance."

She was then retired to The Hague, where she received these Friends; for so the Quakers were at that time called in Holland. This princess had several conferences with them; they held several of

their meetings at her house, and, if they did not make a perfect convert of her, they at least acknowledged that she was not far from the kingdom of heaven. The Friends sowed the good seed likewise in Germany; but had only an indifferent harvest; for the mode of "theeing" and "thouing" was not relished in a country where every one was obliged to make use of "your highness," and "your excellence." Penn soon quitted that country, and returned to England, having received advice that his father was ill, to see him before he died. The vice-admiral was reconciled to his son, and, though of a different persuasion, embraced him tenderly. William in vain exhorted his father not to receive the sacrament, and to die a Quaker; and the good old man entreated his son William to wear buttons on his sleeves, and a crape hatband in his beaver; but all to no purpose.

William inherited very large possessions, part of which consisted of crown debts, due to the vice-admiral for sums he had advanced for the sea-service. No moneys were at that time less secure than those owing from the king. Penn was obliged to go, more than once, and "thee" and "thou" Charles and his ministers, to recover the debt; and at last, instead of specie, the government invested him with the right and sovereignty of a province of America, to the south of Maryland. Thus was a Quaker raised to sovereign power.

He set sail for his new dominions with two ships filled with Quakers, who followed his fortune. The country was then named by them Pennsylvania.

from William Penn; and he founded Philadelphia, which is now a very flourishing city. His first care was to make an alliance with his American neighbors; and this is the only treaty between those people and the Christians that was not ratified by an oath, and that was never infringed. The new sovereign also enacted several wise and wholesome laws for his colony, which have remained invariably the same to this day. The chief is, to ill-treat no person on account of religion, and to consider as brethren all those who believe in one God. He had no sooner settled his government than several American merchants came and peopled this colony. The natives of the country, instead of flying into the woods, cultivated by degrees a friendship with the peaceable Quakers. They loved these new strangers as much as they disliked the other Christians, who had conquered and ravaged America. In a little time these savages, as they are called, delighted with their new neighbors, flocked in crowds to Penn, to offer themselves as his vassals. It was an uncommon thing to behold a sovereign "thee'd" and "thou'd" by his subjects, and addressed by them with their hats on; and no less singular for a government to be without one priest in it; a people without arms, either for offence or preservation; a body of citizens without any distinctions but those of public employments; and for neighbors to live together free from envy or jealousy. In a word, William Penn might, with reason, boast of having brought down upon earth the Golden Age, which in all probability, never had any real existence but in his dominions.

Some time afterwards he returned to England, to settle some affairs relating to his new dominions. King James II., who had loved his father, had the same affection for the son, and considered him rather as a great man than an obscure sectary. The king's politics, on this occasion, agreed with his inclinations. He was desirous of pleasing the Quakers, by annulling the laws made against Nonconformists, in order to have an opportunity, by this general toleration, to introduce the Romish religion. All the sectaries in England saw the snare that was laid for them, and took care to be on their guard; they always unite when the Romish religion, their common enemy, is to be opposed. But Penn did not think himself bound, in any manner, to renounce his principles, merely to favor Protestants who hated him, in opposition to a king who loved him. He had established liberty of conscience in his American dominions, and he would not appear to intend to destroy it in Europe. He therefore adhered to James, and so strictly, that he was generally accused of being a Jesuit. However, the unfortunate King James II. was, like most princes of the Stuart family, an odd medley of grandeur and weakness; and, like them, always did too much or too little, lost his kingdom in a manner that could not be accounted for. All the English sectaries accepted from William III. and his parliament, the toleration and indulgence which they had refused when offered by King James. It was then the Quakers began to enjoy, by virtue of the laws, the several privileges they possess at this time.

WILLIAM PENN

Penn, having at length seen Quakerism firmly established in his native country, returned to Pennsylvania; where, at his arrival, he was received by his own people and the Americans with tears of joy, as if he had been a father, returned to his children after a long absence. The laws he had enacted had been religiously observed in his absence; a circumstance which had happened to no legislator but himself. After having resided some years in Pennsylvania, he quitted it, but with great reluctance, to return to England, there to solicit some matters in favor of the trade of Pennsylvania. But he lived not to revisit it again, being taken off by death in London, in 1718.

It was in the reign of Charles II. that they obtained the noble distinction of being exempted from giving their testimony on oath in a court of justice, and being believed on their bare affirmation. On this occasion the chancellor, who was a man of wit, spoke to them as follows: "Friends, Jupiter one day ordered that all the beasts of burden should repair to be shod. The asses represented that their laws would not allow them to submit to that operation. 'Very well,' said Jupiter; 'then you shall not be shod; but the first false step you make, you may depend upon being severely drubbed.'"

I cannot guess what may be the fate of Quakerism in America; but I perceive it loses ground daily in England. In all countries, where the established religion is of a mild and tolerating nature, it will at length swallow up all the rest. Quakers cannot sit as representatives in parliament, nor can they

enjoy any posts or office under the government, because an oath must be always taken on these occasions, and they never swear; so that they are reduced to the necessity of subsisting by traffic. Their children, when enriched by the industry of their parents, become desirous of enjoying honors, and of wearing buttons and ruffles; are ashamed of being called Quakers, and become converts to the Church of England, merely to be in the faction.

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## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

ENGLAND is truly the country of sectaries—"in my Father's house are many mansions." An Englishman, in virtue of his liberty, goes to heaven his own way. And yet, notwithstanding that every one is permitted to serve God after his own way, the true religion of the nation, that in which a man makes his fortune, is the sect of Episcopalians, called the Church of England, or simply "the Church," by way of eminence. No one can possess an employment, either in England or Ireland, unless he be ranked among the orthodox, or a member of the Church of England, as by law established. This reason—which carries its conviction with it—has operated so effectually on the minds of dissenters of all persuasions, that not a twentieth part of the nation is out of the pale of the established Church.

The English clergy have retained a great number of the ceremonies of the Church of Rome; and, in particular, that of receiving, with a most scrupulous

exactness, their tithes. They have also the pious ambition of aiming at superiority; for where is the simple curate of a village who would not willingly be pope?

Moreover, they make a religious merit of inspiring their flock with a holy zeal against every one who dissents from their church. This zeal burned fiercely under the Tories during the four last years of Queen Anne's reign; but happily produced no greater mischief than the breaking of the windows of some few meeting-houses; for the rage of religious parties ceased in England with the civil wars, and was under Queen Anne no more than the murmurings of a sea, whose billows still heaved, after a violent storm. When the Whigs and the Tories laid waste their native country, in the same manner as the Guelphs and Ghibellines formerly did Italy, it was absolutely necessary for both parties to call in religion to their aid. The Tories were for Episcopacy, the Whigs for abolishing it; but when these had got the upper hand, they contented themselves with only limiting its power.

When the earl of Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke used to drink healths to the Tory cause, the Church of England considered these noblemen as defenders of its holy privileges. The lower house of convocation, a kind of house of commons, composed wholly of the clergy, was in some credit at that time; at least, the members of it had the liberty of meeting to discuss ecclesiastical matters; to sentence, from time to time, to the flames, all impious books, that is, books written against themselves. The ministry,

which is composed of Whigs at present, does not now so much as allow these gentlemen to assemble; so that they are at this time reduced—in the obscurity of their respective parishes—to the dull occupation of praying for the prosperity of that government, whose tranquillity they would not unwillingly disturb.

With respect to the bishops, who are twenty-six in all, they still maintain their seats in the house of lords in spite of the Whigs; because ancient custom, or, if you please, abuse, of considering them as barons, still subsists. There is a clause, however, in the oath they are obliged to take to the government, that puts these gentlemen's Christian patience to a severe trial; namely, that they shall be of the Church of England, as by law established. There is hardly a bishop, dean, or other dignitary, but imagines himself so *jure divino;* and consequently it cannot but be a great mortification to them to be obliged to confess that they owe their dignities to a pitiful law made by a set of profane laymen. A learned monk (Father Courayer) wrote a book, not long ago, to prove the validity and succession of English ordinations. This book was forbidden in France; but think you the English ministry were pleased with it? No such thing. Those cursed Whigs do not care a straw whether the Episcopal succession among them has been interrupted or not; or whether Bishop Parker was consecrated in a tavern,[1] as some pretend, or in a church, choosing rather that the bishops should derive their authority

[1] Alluding to the Nag's Head Consecration.

from the parliament than from the apostles. Lord B—— observed that the notion of divine right would only serve to make tyrants in lawn sleeves and rochets; but that the law made citizens.

With respect to the morals of the English clergy, they are more regular than those of France, and for this reason: the clergy, in general, are educated in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, at a distance from the depravity and corruption that are found in the capital. They are not called to the dignities of the Church till very late, at a time of life when men are sensible of no other passion but avarice, and their ambition wants a supply. Employments are here bestowed, both in church and army, as the rewards for long services only; and there is hardly an instance of boys being made bishops or colonels, immediately upon their leaving school. Besides, most of the clergy are married. The pedantic airs contracted at the university, and the little commerce men of this profession have with the women, commonly oblige a bishop to confine himself to his own. Clergymen sometimes take a cheerful glass at the tavern, because it is the custom so to do; and if they chance to take a cup too much, it is with great sobriety, and without giving the least scandal.

That undefinable mixed kind of mortal who is neither of the clergy nor of the laity; in a word, the thing called *abbé* in France, is a species utterly unknown in England. All the clergy here are very much upon the reserve, and most of them pedants. When these are told, that in France young fellows,

distinguished for their dissoluteness, and raised to the prelacy by female intrigues, address the fair sex publicly in an amorous way, amuse themselves with writing tender songs, entertain their friends splendidly every night at their own houses, and after the feast is over, withdraw to invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and boldly assume the title of successors to the apostles; when the English, I say, are told these things, they bless God that they are Protestants. But these are shameless heretics, who deserve to fry in hell with all the devils, as Master Rabelais says; and, for this reason, I shall trouble myself no more about them.

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## THE PRESBYTERIANS.

The Church of England is confined wholly to England and Ireland, Presbyterianism being the established religion in Scotland. This Presbyterianism is exactly the same as Calvinism, as it was established in France, and is now professed at Geneva. As the priests of this sect receive but very inconsiderable stipends from their churches, and consequently cannot live in the same luxurious manner with bishops, they very naturally exclaim against honors to which they cannot attain. Figure to yourself the haughty Diogenes trampling under foot the pride of Plato. The Scotch Presbyterians are not very unlike that proud and beggarly reasoner. Diogenes did not treat Alexander with half the in-

solence with which these treated King Charles II., for when they took up arms in his cause against Cromwell, who had deceived them, they compelled that poor prince to undergo the hearing of three or four sermons every day; would not suffer him to play; reduced him to a state of penance and mortification; insomuch, that Charles very soon grew weary of these pedants, and made his escape from them with as much joy as a youth does from school.

In presence of the young, the gay, the sprightly French graduate, who bawls for a whole morning together in the divinity school, and makes one at a concert in the evening with the ladies, a Church of England clergyman is a Cato. But this Cato is a very Jemmy, when compared with a Scotch Presbyterian. The latter affects a solemn gait, a sour countenance, wears a broad-brimmed hat and a long cloak over a short coat, preaches through the nose, and calls by the name of "Whore of Babylon" all churches where the ministers are so fortunate as to enjoy a good five or six thousand a year, and where the people are weak enough to suffer this, and give them the titles of "my lord," "your grace," or "your eminence." These gentlemen, who have also some churches in England, have brought an outside of gravity and austerity in some measure into fashion. To them is owing the sanctification of Sunday in the three kingdoms. People are forbidden to work or take any recreation on that day, which is being twice as severe as the Romish Church. No operas, plays, or concerts are allowed in London on

Sundays; and even cards are so expressly forbidden, that none but persons of quality, and those we call genteel, play on that day; the rest of the nation go either to church, to the tavern, or to a kept mistress'.

Though the Episcopal and Presbyterian sects are the two prevailing ones in Great Britain, yet all others are very welcome to come and settle in it, and they live very sociably together, though most of their preachers hate one another almost as cordially as a Jansenist damns a Jesuit.

Take a view of the Royal Exchange in London, a place more venerable than many courts of justice, where the representatives of all nations meet for the benefit of mankind. There the Jew, the Mahometan, and the Christian transact business together, as though they were all of the same religion, and give the name of Infidels to none but bankrupts; there the Presbyterian confides in the Anabaptist, and the Churchman depends upon the Quaker's word. At the breaking up of this pacific and free assembly, some withdraw to the synagogue, and others to take a glass. This man goes and is baptized in a great tub, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that man has his son's foreskin cut off, and causes a set of Hebrew words—to the meaning of which he himself is an utter stranger—to be mumbled over the infant; others retire to their churches, and there wait the inspiration of heaven with their hats on; and all are satisfied.

If one religion only were allowed in England, the government would very possibly become arbitrary;

if there were but two, the people would cut one another's throats; but, as there is such a multitude, they all live happy, and in peace.

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## THE SOCINIANS, OR ARIANS, OR ANTI-TRINITARIANS.

THERE is a little sect here, composed of clergymen, and a few of the most learned of the laity, who neither assume the name of Arians or Socinians, and yet are directly opposite in union to St. Athanasius with regard to the Trinity; not scrupling to declare frankly that the Father is greater than the Son.

Do you remember what is related of a certain orthodox bishop, who, in order to convince an emperor of the reality of consubstantiation, put his hand under the chin of the monarch's son and gave him a tweak by the nose in presence of his most sacred majesty. The emperor was going to order his attendants to throw the bishop out of the window, when the good old man gave him this polite and convincing reason: "Since your majesty," says he, "is angry when your son has not due respect shown him, what punishment do you think will God the Father inflict on those who refuse His Son Jesus the titles due to Him?" The persons I am speaking of declare that the holy bishop was a rash old fool; that his argument was by no means conclusive; and that his imperial majesty should have answered him in this manner: "Learn that there are two ways by which men may be wanting in the

respect they owe to me; first, in not doing honor sufficient to my son; and, secondly, in paying him the same honors as you do me."

Be this as it will, the principles of Arius began to revive, not only in England, but in Holland and Poland. The celebrated Sir Isaac Newton honored this opinion so far as to countenance it. This philosopher thought that the Unitarians argued more mathematically than we do; but the most zealous stickler for Arianism is the illustrious Dr. Clarke. This man is rigidly virtuous and of a mild disposition; is more fond of his tenets than desirous of propagating them; and so totally absorbed in problems and calculations that he is a mere reasoning machine. He wrote a book, which is very much esteemed and little understood, on the "Existence of God"; and another, more intelligible, indeed, but pretty much contemned, on the "Truth of the Christian Religion."

He never engaged in those curious scholastic disputes which our friend calls "venerable trifles." He only published a work containing all the testimonies of the primitive ages, for and against the Unitarians, and leaves to the reader the counting of the voices and the liberty of passing sentence. This book won the doctor a great number of partisans and lost him the archbishopric of Canterbury; for when Queen Anne was about to bestow that see on him, a reverend doctor, whose name was Gibson, for certain reasons known to himself, and which were doubtless very good ones, observed to her majesty that Dr. Clarke was undoubtedly the most learned and up-

right man in the kingdom, and that he wanted only one qualification to be the most deserving object of her majesty's gracious favor. "And pray what is that, doctor?" asked the queen. "May it please your majesty, to be a Christian," replied the humane and benevolent priest. In my opinion, Dr. Clarke was a little out in his calculation, and had better have been an orthodox primate of all England than a mere Arian curate.

You see that opinions are subject to as many revolutions as empires. Arianism, after having triumphed during three centuries, and having been buried in oblivion for twelve, rises at length out of its own ashes; but it has chosen a very improper time to make its appearance in the present age, being quite cloyed with disputes and sects. The members of this sect are as yet too few to be indulged the liberty of holding public assemblies, which, however, they will doubtless be permitted to do, in case they spread considerably; but people nowadays are so cold with respect to all things of this kind, that there is little probability of making a fortune, either in a new religion, or in one revived. Is it not whimsical enough that Luther, Calvin, and Zuinglius, whose writings nobody now reads, should have founded sects that are at present spread over a great part of Europe? That Mahomet, though so ignorant, should have given a religion to Asia and Africa? and that Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Clarke, Mr. Locke, Mr. Le Clerc, and others, the greatest philosophers, as well as the ablest writers of their ages, should scarcely have been able to raise

a better flock. This it is to be born at a proper period of time. Were Cardinal de Retz to return again into the world, he would not draw ten women in Paris after him; were Oliver Cromwell, he who beheaded his sovereign and seized upon the regal dignity, to rise from the dead, he would be a wealthy city trader, and nothing more.

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## THE PEOPLING OF AMERICA.

The discovery of America, that object of so much avarice and ambition, has likewise become the object of philosophy. A prodigious number of writers have endeavored to prove that the Americans are a colony of the ancient world. Some modest metaphysicians have alleged that the same power which made the grass to grow on the plains of America might likewise stock the country with inhabitants; but this naked and simple system has not been regarded.

When first the great Columbus gave it as his opinion that there might possibly be such a new world, it was boldly asserted that it was absolutely impossible; and Columbus was taken for a visionary. When he had actually made the discovery it was pretended that this new world was known long before.

Some have alleged that one Martin Beheim, a native of Nuremberg, set sail from the coasts of Flanders about the year 1460 to go in quest of this

unknown world; and that he reached the Straits of Magellan, of which he left charts. But as Martin Beheim did not people America, and as it was absolutely necessary that one of Noah's great-grandsons should take this trouble, they have ransacked the records of antiquity to see if they could find anything that had the least resemblance to a long voyage, and which they could apply to the discovery of this fourth part of the globe. Accordingly they have sent the ships of Solomon to Mexico, and have made them bring thence the gold of Ophir, though he was obliged to borrow it from King Hiram. They have even found America in Plato. They have given the honor of its discovery to the Carthaginians, and have quoted on this subject a book of Aristotle's, which he never wrote.

Hornius pretends to find some analogy between the language of the Hebrews and that of the Caribbees. Father Laffiteau, the Jesuit, has not failed to improve such a curious hint. The Mexicans, in the violence of their grief, tear their garments; some Asiatics do the same; therefore they are the ancestors of the Mexicans. We may add, with as much reason, that the people of Languedoc are fond of dancing, the Hurons likewise dance on their days of rejoicing, and, therefore, the Languedocians are descended from the Hurons, or the Hurons from the Languedocians.

The authors of a terrible "Universal History" pretend that all the Americans are a colony of the Tartars. They assure us that this is the opinion most generally received among the learned; but do

not inform us whether it be among the learned that think for themselves. According to them, some descendant of Noah had nothing more at heart than to go and fix his quarters in the delicious country of Kamchatka, to the north of Siberia. His children, having nothing to do, went to visit Canada, either by equipping a fleet for the purpose, or by walking on the ice by way of recreation, along some neck of land, which from that time to the present has never been again discovered. They then began to beget children in Canada, and in a very short time that beautiful country, being no longer able to maintain the prodigious number of inhabitants, they went to people Mexico, Peru, and Chili; and their great-granddaughters were brought to bed of giants near the Straits of Magellan.

As lions are to be found in some of the hotter climates of America, these authors suppose that the Christopher Columbus of Kamchatka carried over some lions to Canada for their diversion.

But the Kamchatkians were not the only people that furnished the new world with inhabitants; they were charitably assisted by the Tartars of Mantchou; by the Huns, the Chinese, and the Japanese.

The Tartars of Mantchou are incontestably the ancestors of the Peruvians; for Mangoo-Capac was the first inca of Peru. Mango resembles Manco, Manco Mancu, Mancu Mantchu, and hence, by a small addition, we have Mantchou. Nothing can be better demonstrated.

As to the Huns, they built in Hungary a town that was called Cunadi. Now, by changing *cu* into

*ca*, we have Canadi, from which Canada evidently derives its name.

A plant resembling the ginseng of the Chinese grows in Canada, therefore the Chinese carried it thither, even before they were masters of that part of Chinese Tartary where their ginseng is produced; and besides, the Chinese are such great sailors that they formerly sent fleets to America without preserving the least correspondence with their colonies.

With regard to the Japanese, as they lie nearest to America, from which they are distant only about twelve hundred leagues, they must certainly have been there in former times; but they afterward neglected that voyage.

Such are the learned tracts that are boldly ushered into the world in the present age. What answer can we give to these systems, and to so many others of the like nature? None.

If it was an effect of philosophy that discovered America, it certainly is not one to be every day asking how it happened that men were found on this continent, and how they had been transported thither? If we are not surprised to find that there are flies in America, it is very stupid to express our wonder that there should be men there also.

The savage who thinks himself a production of the climate in which he lives, the same as his orignal and manioc root, is not more ignorant than ourselves in this point, and reasons better. In fact, as the negro of Africa has not his original from us whites, why should the red, olive, or ash-colored

people of America come from our countries? And, besides, which was the primitive or mother country of all the others?

Were the flowers, fruits, trees, and animals, with which nature covers the face of the earth, planted by her at first only in one spot, in order that they might be spread over the rest of the world? Where must that spot have been which first produced all the grass, and all the oats, and dispersed them afterward through all other parts of the globe? How were the moss and the firs of Norway conveyed to the countries of the southern pole? You cannot suppose any one country which is not almost wholly destitute of some of the productions of another. We must suppose, then, that originally it had everything, and that now it has nothing. Every climate has its different productions, and the most fruitful is extremely poor in comparison with all the others put together. The great Master of Nature has peopled with variety the whole globe. The firs of Norway certainly are not the parents of the clove trees of the Molucca Islands; as little are they indebted for their origin to the firs of any other country. We may as well suppose the grass growing in Archangel to be produced by that on the banks of the Ganges. It would never come into our heads to suppose that the caterpillars and snails of one part of the world were produced in another part; why then should we be surprised that America produces some species of animals and some race of men resembling ours?

Not only America, but Africa and Asia also, pro-

duce and contain vegetables and animals resembling those in Europe; and each of those continents do likewise produce many kinds that have not the least resemblance to those of the old world.

The lands in Mexico, Peru, and Canada never bear wheat, which is a part of our food, nor grapes, which make our common drink; nor olives, which is so useful a fruit to us; nor indeed the greatest part of our other fruits. All our beasts of burden, such as horses, camels, asses, and oxen, were creatures wholly unknown in that part of the world; they had, indeed, a kind of oxen and sheep, but altogether different from ours. The sheep of Peru were larger and stronger than those of Europe, and were made use of to carry loads; their oxen were a breed somewhat between our camel and buffalo. There is a species of hogs in Mexico which have their navels at their backs, instead of their bellies, as in all other quadrupeds. There are neither dogs nor cats in this country; there are lions here, indeed, and in Peru, but very small, and almost without hair, and what is most extraordinary, the lion of these climates is a cowardly creature.

You may, if you please, reduce all mankind to one single species, because they have the same organs of life, sense, and motion; but this species is evidently divided into several others, whether we consider it in a physical or moral light.

As to the first of these, the Esquimaux, a race of people inhabiting the sixtieth degree of north latitude, are said to resemble the Laplanders in figure and stature. The neighboring people have faces

covered with hair. The Iroquois, the Hurons, and all the people of that tract, as far as Florida, are olive colored, and without the least appearance of hair on any part of the body except their heads. Captain Rogers, who sailed along the coast of California, discovered a species of negroes unknown in America. On the Isthmus of Panama there is a race of people called Dariens, who greatly resemble the Albinos of Africa. They are at most four feet high; they are white, and are the only native people of all America who are of a white color; they have red eyes bordered with eyelashes in the form of a semicircle. They never stir out of their holes but in the night time, not being able to see in daylight, and are to the rest of mankind what owls are to the feathered race. The natives of Mexico and Peru are of a copper color, those of Brazil of a deeper red, and the people of Chili are more ash colored; the size of the Patagonians, or inhabitants of the Straits of Magellan, has been greatly exaggerated; the truth seems to be that they are by far the tallest people of any in the known world.

Among all these nations, so greatly differing from us and from one another, there has never yet been found a race of men living without society, wandering as chance might direct, like the brutes, or like them coupling promiscuously, or quitting their females to go in quest of food by themselves; such a state seems incompatible with human nature, which, by the instinct of species, affects society as it does liberty. Hence we find that the shutting up of a prisoner in a prison, where he is debarred any com-

merce with the rest of mankind, is one of the many punishments invented by tyrants for the torture of their fellow-creatures; and is a punishment which would appear less supportable to a savage than to a civilized man.

From the Straits of Magellan to Hudson's Bay there are a number of families gathered under one chief and living in huts which compose villages; but we have no instance in those parts of any wandering people abandoning their habitations, according to the seasons, like the Arabians, Bedouins, and Tartars. The reason seems to be that these people, not having any beasts of burden, could not so easily transport their cabins. We everywhere meet with certain fixed idioms by which the most savage nations are enabled to express the few ideas they are masters of; this is another instinct peculiar to mankind, to denote their wants by certain articulate sounds. Names must necessarily have arisen from the number of different languages, more or less copious, according to the greater or lesser degree of understanding in those who made use of them. Nay, the language of the Mexicans was more regular than that of the Iroquois, as ours is more copious and absolute than that of the Samoyeds.

Of all the people of America, only one nation had a religion, which seems, at first sight, not to be repugnant to reason; these are the Peruvians, who, like the ancient Persians and Sabeans, adored the sun as a planet that dispensed its benefits to all creation; but, excepting the large and well-peopled nations in America, all the others were plunged in

a state of the most barbarous stupidity. Their religious assemblies had no mark of a regular worship, and their belief was without form. It is certain that the Brazilians, the inhabitants of the Caribbean and Molucca islands, and the people of Guiana, and the northern countries, had no clearer notion of a Supreme Being than the Kaffirs of Africa. A knowledge of this kind requires a reason that has been cultivated, which their reasons were not. Nature alone may inspire with a confused idea of something supremely powerful and terrible, the savage who sees a thunderbolt fall, or beholds a mighty river break its bounds; but this is only a faint beginning of the knowledge of God, creator of the universe; a knowledge which was absolutely wanting to all the inhabitants of the vast continent of America.

The other Americans, who had formed to themselves a religion, had made an abominable one. The Mexicans were not the only people who sacrificed human victims to a certain evil deity of their own invention. It has been said that the Peruvians were wont to disgrace their worship of the sun by similar bloody offerings. And there seems to be some kind of conformity between the ancient people of our hemisphere and the more civilized of the other, in regard to this barbarous religion.

We are assured by Herrera that the Mexicans feasted on the flesh of the human victims that they offered in sacrifice. The greater part of the first travellers and missionaries all agree that the people of the Brazils and the Caribbean Islands, as also

the Iroquois and Hurons, and some other of those nations, ate the prisoners whom they took in their wars; and that they did not look upon this as a custom peculiar to themselves, but as the general practice of all nations. So many authors, both ancient and modern, have made mention of cannibals, or man-eaters, that it is difficult to deny that there are such. In 1725, I saw four savages at Fontainebleau, who had been brought from the Mississippi; among them was a woman of an ash-colored complexion, like that of her companions. I asked her, by the interpreter who was with them, whether she had at any time eaten human flesh; to which she answered, "yes," in the same indifferent manner as if it had been a common question. This barbarity, which so much shocks our nature, is, however, far less cruel than murder; real barbarity consists in taking away the life of any one, and not in disputing the dead carcass with the crows or the worms. A people who lived altogether by hunting, as did the Brazilians and Canadians, and the inhabitants of the Caribbean Islands, might sometimes, on failure of their usual food, be driven to this shocking recourse to supply the calls of nature. Hunger and vengeance might have accustomed them to this food; and when we see in the most civilized ages the people of Paris devouring the mangled remains of Marshal d'Ancre, and those of the Hague eating the heart of the grand pensionary, De Witt, we need not wonder that a deed of horror that was only temporary with us, has become a lasting custom among savages.

The most ancient writings extant confirm to us, that men may have been driven to this excess by hunger. Moses himself threatens the Hebrews in five verses of Deuteronomy, that they should eat their own children, if they transgressed the law; and the prophet Ezekiel promises the same people, in the name of God, that if they fight valiantly against the king of Persia, the Lord will give them to eat of the flesh of the horse and of the horseman. Marco Polo, or Mark Paul, says that in his time, in one part of Tartary, the magicians or priests—which were the same—had the privilege of eating the flesh of criminals condemned to death. This strikes one with horror; but the picture of human kind will be found too frequently to produce this effect.

How has it happened that people who were always separated from each other by their countries have yet been united in this horrible custom? Can we suppose it to be not altogether repugnant to human nature? It is certain that this practice is very rare; but it is as certain that it does really exist.

There is another vice altogether different from this, and seemingly more contrary to the end of nature, in which, nevertheless, the Greeks prided themselves, which the Romans allowed, and which has continued to prevail among the most civilized nations, and is much more common in the warm and temperate climates of Europe and of Asia, than in the frozen regions of the North. There have been instances in America of the same effect of the ca-

prices of human nature. The natives of Brazil practised this unnatural custom in common; it was unknown to the Canadians. But how happens it that a passion which overturns all the laws of propagation of the human species, should, in both parts of the world, have taken possession of the very organs of propagation themselves?

Another observation, no less important, is that the central parts of Africa have been found to be tolerably well peopled, and the two extremities towards the poles very thinly inhabited; in general, the new world does not appear to contain the number of people it should do. There must certainly be some natural causes for this.

In the first place, then, the cold is as excessive and piercing in America, in the same degree of latitude as Paris and Vienna, as in our continent at the polar circle.

In the second place, the rivers in America are for the most part ten times as large as ours, and as these frequently overflow, they must have occasioned a great dearth, and in consequence, mortality in those immense tracts. The mountains, by being much higher, are not so habitable as ours. The violent and lasting poisons with which the whole soil of America is covered, renders the slightest wound of an arrow dipped in their juice instantaneously mortal. And, lastly, the stupidity of the human species in a part of this hemisphere may have greatly contributed to depopulate the country. It is a general remark that the human understanding is not nearly so perfect in the New as in the Old World. Man is

a very feeble animal, and, when in a state of infancy, very liable to perish for want of due care; and it cannot be supposed that when the inhabitants on the banks of the Rhone, the Elbe, and the Vistula were wont to plunge their new-born infants into those rivers, that the German and Sarmatian mothers reared as many children as they do now; especially when those countries were covered with vast woods, which made the climate more inclement and unwholesome than it has been of late times. Numberless colonies of Americans were in want of proper food. They could not furnish their infants with good milk; nor could they provide for them afterwards, either wholesome food, or a sufficiency of it. We find several of the carnivorous kind of animals greatly reduced in number, for want of subsistence; and it is a matter of surprise that we meet with more men in America than monkeys.

## FERNANDO CORTÉS.

It is said that, as a Spanish captain was marching through the lands of a cacique, the latter presented him with a number of slaves and some game, saying: "If thou art a god, there are men, eat them; if thou art a mortal, here is the flesh of animals, which these slaves will dress for thee."

## THE CONQUEST OF PERU.

The first of the Incas, or emperors of Peru, who conquered that country and gave the inhabitants laws, passed for a son of the sun. Thus we find the

most civilized nations, both of the Old and New World, resembled one another in the custom of deifying great and extraordinary men, whether conquerors or legislators.

Garcilaso de la Vega, a descendant from the Incas, who was brought to Madrid, wrote the history of those kings, in 1608. He was then far advanced in years; and his father might easily have been a witness to the revolution which happened in that country in 1530. He could not, indeed, know with any certainty the minuter parts of the history of his ancestors. The people of America were strangers to the art of writing, resembling in this respect the ancient Tartar nations, the inhabitants of the southern parts of Africa, our ancestors, the Celts, and most of the people of the North; none of all these nations had anything that could supply the place of history. The Peruvians transmitted their principal events to posterity by means of knots tied on cords; but we find that in general fundamental laws, the most essential points of religion, and heroic exploits, are transmitted with tolerable fidelity from person to person by word of mouth, in which manner Garcilasso might have acquired his knowledge of some capital events, and in such only, he is worthy of our credit. He says that throughout all the Peruvian Empire they worshipped the sun; a worship which appeared more reasonable than any other, in a country that did not enjoy the light of revelation. Pliny admitted no other god, even in the most enlightened ages of Rome. Plato, who was still more enlightened than he, called the sun

the son of God, the splendor of the Father; and we find this planet adored many ages before by the Magi, and the ancient Egyptians; the same appearance of truth and the same error prevailed equally in both hemispheres.

The Peruvians had obelisks and regular gnomonic instruments, to show the points of the equinoxes and solstices. Their year consisted of three hundred and sixty-five days; perhaps the science of ancient Egypt did not extend further. They raised prodigies in architecture, and cut statues with surprising art. In a word, they were the best polished, and the most industrious people of any in the New World.

The Inca Huascar, father of Atahualpa, the last of the Incas, in whose reign this vast empire was destroyed, had greatly augmented and embellished it.

In the pacific and religious ceremonies instituted to the honor of the sun, they formed certain dances; nothing is more natural; it was one of the ancient customs in our part of the world. Huascar, in order to render these dances more grave and solemn, made the performers carry a chain of gold, seven hundred of our geometrical paces in length, and as thick as a man's wrist; each dancer took hold of a link. Hence we may conclude that gold must have been more plentiful in Peru than copper is with us.

Here let us observe, that if the Mexicans are chargeable with having sometimes sacrificed their conquered enemies to the god of war, the Peruvians were never known to offer such sacrifices to the sun, whom they looked on as a good and benignant deity. And indeed the Peruvian nation itself was perhaps

the most gentle in its manners of any in the whole world.

The Mariana Islands, lying near the line, demand our particular attention. The inhabitants of those islands know not what fire is, and indeed that element would be altogether useless to them, as they live wholly upon fruits, which their land produces in great abundance; especially cocoa, sago, which is much superior to rice, and a kind of paste or dough, that has the taste of the best bread, and is formed in a pod or shell on the top of a large tree. It is said that these people commonly live to the age of a hundred and twenty; the same has been said of the natives of Brazil. When they were first discovered, they were neither wild nor cruel; nor did they want for any of the conveniences which were necessary for their subsistence. Their houses were built of the planks of cocoa trees, formed for the purpose, with great industry, and were neat and regular. Their gardens were laid out with great art; and they were, perhaps, the most happy, and the least wretched of any people whatever. Nevertheless, the Portuguese called their country "the Island of Thieves"—*Islas de los Ladrones*—because those people, not being perfectly versed in the *meum et tuum,* happened to eat some of their ship provisions. There was no more religion among them than among the Hottentots or many other of the African and American nations. But beyond these islands, towards the Moluccas, there are other nations where the Mahometan religion was introduced in the time of the caliphs. The Mahometans had

sailed thither through the Indian Ocean, and the Christians came through the South Sea. Had the Arabians known the use of the compass, they were the only people to have discovered America, as lying in the very track; but their navigation never extended farther than the Isle of Mindanao, to the west of the Manillas. This vast cluster of islands was inhabited by different species of men, some white, some black, some olive, and some red, or copper-colored. Nature has been always found to vary more in hot climates than in those to the northward.

At the time that the Spaniards invaded the richest part of the New World, the Portuguese, glutted with the treasures of the new, neglected the Brazils, which they had discovered in the year 1500, without looking after them.

The Portuguese admiral, Cabral, after having passed the Cape Verde Islands, on his way to the coast of Malabar, through the southern sea of Africa, steered so far to the westward, that he fell in with the land of Brazil, which is that part of the continent of America, which lies nearest to Africa; there being but thirty degrees of longitude between this coast and Mount Atlas; it consequently was the first discovered. The country was found to be extremely fertile, and blooming with a continual Spring. The natives were stout, well-made, robust, and vigorous: their complexion was of a reddish cast; they went quite naked, excepting only a large belt round their middles, which served them as a kind of pouch.

They lived by hunting; and as they were not

always assured of a certain subsistence, were consequently wild and fierce, making war on one another, with their arrows and clubs, for the spoils of the chase, in the same manner as the civilized barbarians of the old continent did, for the possession of a few villages. Anger and resentment for injuries actual or supposed frequently armed them against one another, as we read of the ancient Greeks and people of Asia. They did not sacrifice human victims, for they had no religious worship among them, and consequently could have no sacrifices to make, as the Mexicans had; but they feasted on the persons they took in battle; and Americus Vespucius relates, in one of his letters, that these people were struck with astonishment to hear that the Europeans did not eat their prisoners.

As to laws, the Brazilians had none, but such as were made on instant need, by the people assembled together. They were governed wholly by instinct. By this instinct they went to the chase when pressed by hunger, took to themselves wives, when necessity required, and satisfied the calls of a momentary passion indiscriminately.

These people are alone a convincing proof that America was never known to the Old World, or certainly some kind of religion would have found its way among them, from the continent of Africa, to which they are so near; and there must have remained some small traces of this religion, whatever it had been: whereas there is none to be found. They had indeed certain jugglers among them, who went about with their heads adorned with feathers,

stirred the people up to battle, pointed out to them the new moon, and pretended to cure them of their maladies with certain herbs; but no one ever heard of either priests, altars, or any kind of religious worship among them.

The people of Mexico and Peru, who were more civilized, had a regular worship. Religion with them was the support of the state, because it was entirely subject to, and dependent on, the sovereign; but there could be no state or government among savages, who had neither wants nor a police.

The Portuguese government suffered the colonies which their merchants had sent to the Brazils to languish nearly fifty years unsupported, and almost unnoticed. At length, in 1559, it made some solid regulations relating thereto, and the kings of Portugal received tribute from both worlds at the same time. When Philip II., king of Spain, conquered Portugal, in 1581, he found a considerable increase of wealth in the Brazils. The Dutch afterwards took them almost entirely from the Spaniards from 1625 till 1630.

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## THE NEGRO.

The negro race is a species of men as different from ours as the breed of spaniels is from that of greyhounds. The mucous membrane, or network, which nature has spread between the muscles and the skin, is white in us and black or copper-colored in them. The famous Ruisch was the first in our time, who, in dissecting a negro at Amsterdam, was

so happily skilful as to raise the whole of this mucoreticular membrane. Czar Peter purchased it of him; but Ruisch kept a small piece for himself, which I have seen, and it is like a piece of black gauze. If a negro by accident burns himself so that his membrane is hurt, his skin turns brown in the place, otherwise it comes black again as before. Their eyes are not formed like ours. The black wool on their heads and other parts has no resemblance to our hair; and it may be said that if their understanding is not of a different nature from ours, it is at least greatly inferior. They are not capable of any great application or association of ideas, and seem formed neither for the advantages nor abuses of our philosophy. They are a race peculiar to that part of Africa, the same as elephants and monkeys. The negroes of the empire of Morocco are a warlike, hardy, and cruel people, and often superior in the field to the sunburned, tawny troops, whom they call white. They think themselves born in Guinea, to be sold to the whites and to serve them.

There are several kinds of negroes. Those of Guinea, Ethiopia, Madagascar and the Indies are all different. The blacks of Guinea and Congo have wool; the others long, shaggy hair. The petty nations of blacks, who have but little commerce with other nations, are strangers to all kind of religious worship. The first degree of stupidity is to think only of the present and of bodily wants. This was the state of several nations, and especially those which inhabited islands. The second degree is to foresee by halves, without being able to form any

fixed society; to behold the stars with wonder and amazement; to celebrate certain feasts, to make a general rejoicing on the return of certain seasons, or the appearance of a particular star, without going further or having any distinct positive idea. In this middle state between imbecility and infant reason, many nations have continued for several ages.

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## THE FRENCH IN AMERICA.

SPAIN drew immense treasures from Mexico and Peru—which, however, have not greatly enriched them in the end—at a time when other nations had not a single colony in the other parts of America that was of any advantage to them; this naturally excited their jealousy and determined them to follow the example of the Spaniards.

Admiral Coligny, who had great ideas in everything, formed a scheme in the year 1557, during the reign of Henry II., to establish a colony of French of his own sect in the Brazils. The chevalier de Villegagnon, at that time a Calvinist, was sent thither. Calvin himself embarked in the undertaking. The Genoese were not at that time such good traders as at present, and Calvin sent over a greater number of preachers than laborers. The former wanting to have the upper hand, there ensued a violent quarrel between the commandant and them, which terminated in a sedition. The colony, thus divided, was attacked and ruined by the Portuguese. Villegagnon renounced Calvin and his min-

isters as a set of religious incendiaries; they stigmatized him for an atheist, and France lost the Brazils.

It was said that the family of the Incas had taken refuge in that extensive country, whose frontiers join to those of Peru; that the greater part of the inhabitants of that country had fled thither from the avarice and cruelty of the European Christians, who occupied the central part, and had settled near a certain lake named Perima, the sand of which was gold; and that they had there built a city, the houses of which were all tiled with that precious metal. The Spaniards were for a long time employed in searching after this city, which they called Eldorado, or the Golden City.

This name roused the attention of all the powers of Europe. In 1596 Queen Elizabeth sent out a fleet, under the command of the ingenious and unfortunate Sir Walter Raleigh, to dispute these glorious spoils with the Spaniards. Raleigh actually discovered a country inhabited by a people of a red complexion; and he pretends, in his writings, to have met with a nation whose shoulders were as high as their heads. He had no doubt that the country furnished mines; and he brought back to England with him a hundred large plates of solid gold and several pieces of the wrought metal; but, after all, there was no Dorado nor Lake Perima to be found. The French, after several fruitless attempts, made a settlement in 1664, on the island of Cayenne, a point of that extensive coast not more than fifteen leagues in circumference, and to which they gave

the name of Equinoctial France, though the whole colony did not consist of above one hundred and fifty houses, partly wood and partly earth: and the island of Cayenne was never worth anything to France, till the time of Louis XIV., who was the first of the French kings that truly encouraged maritime commerce. This island was taken from the French by the Dutch in the war of 1672. But a fleet, sent over by Louis XIV., took it again. Its present produce is a little indigo, and some very bad coffee. Guiana was reputed the finest country in all America, and where the French might have made settlements with the greatest ease; and this was the very country the most neglected by them.

They had heard of Florida, a country lying between the old and new world, part of which the Spaniards were already in possession of; and it was they who first gave the name of Florida to this part of the continent of North America. But, as the captain of a French cruiser pretended to have landed here nearly about the same time as the Spaniards, the right to it was to be disputed; for, by our law of nations, or rather of robbers, the lands of the Americans should be the property not only of the first invaders, but also of any one who pretended to have first discovered them.

Admiral Coligny, in the reign of Charles IX., and about 1564, had sent thither a colony of Huguenots, being desirous of establishing his religion in America, as well as the Spaniards had established theirs. The Spaniards destroyed this country, and hanged up all the French they found in the place

on the trees, with a label to each, saying that they had been hanged not as Frenchmen, but as heretics.

Some time afterwards, one Chevalier de Gourgues, a Gascon, having put himself at the head of a number of pirates to endeavor to recover Florida, made himself master of a small Spanish fort, and, in his turn, hanged up all the prisoners, taking care to affix a card to each, signifying that they had been hanged not as Spaniards, but as robbers and infidels. And now the unhappy natives of America began to see their European despoilers avenge their cause, by mutually destroying each other: a consolation which they had frequently enjoyed.

After having hanged the Spaniards, in order to protect themselves from the same treatment, the French were obliged to evacuate Florida, and made a formal renunciation of their pretended right to that country; which was, in many respects, preferable even to Guiana. But the bloody disputes concerning religion, which at that time spread destruction through all the kingdom of France, left the people no leisure to go and butcher and convert these savages, or contest the possession of this fine country with the Spaniards.

The English had for some time been in possession of the best lands, and the most advantageous in point of situation, that could be wished for in North America, on the other side of Florida, when a few merchants of Normandy, on the simple prospect of establishing a small trade for skins and furs, established a colony in Canada, a country covered with ice or snow during eight months of the year,

and inhabited only by savages, bears, and beavers. This country, which was discovered some time before 1535, had been afterward abandoned; but at length, after several attempts badly supported by the government for want of a sufficient naval force, a small company of merchants of Dieppe and St. Malo founded Quebec, in 1608; that is to say, they built a few huts there, which did not take the form of a town till the reign of Louis XIV.

This settlement and that of Louisburg, as well as all the rest in New France, have been always very poor, while there are no less than fifteen thousand coaches driving through the streets of the city of Mexico, and still more in that of Lima. Nevertheless, the poverty of these countries has not exempted them from being the theatre of continual wars, either with the natives or the English, who, though already possessed of far the best territories, were still anxious to divest the French of those which belonged to them, in order to make themselves sole masters of the trade of this wintry region of the world.

The natives of Canada are not the same as those of Mexico, Peru, or the Brazils. They resemble them in the want of hair, of which they have none except on their eyebrows and head; but they differ from them in their color, which approaches nearer to ours; and still more in their disposition, which is very fierce and brave. They were always entire strangers to monarchical government, the republican spirit having always prevailed among the northern nations, both of the old and new world.

The inhabitants of North America, of the Appalachian mountains, and of Davis's Straits, are all peasants and hunters, living together in little towns or villages, which is an institution natural to the human species. We very seldom give them the name of Indians, having erroneously appropriated that name to the people of Mexico, Peru, and the Brazils; which country has been called the Indies, only because as much treasure comes from there as from the real Indies; but content ourselves with calling them North American savages, though they are less so in some respects than the country people on some of our European seacoasts, who have so long assumed the barbarous right of plundering all vessels that are wrecked on their shores, and murdering the poor unhappy sailors. War, the crime and scourge of all times and all countries, was not with them as it is with us, a mere motive of interest: it was in general the result of vengeance meditated for injuries received, as it was also with the Brazilians and all other savage nations.

The most horrible thing belonging to the Canadians was their custom of putting their captives to death by the most cruel torments, and afterwards eating them. This barbarous practice they learned from the people of Brazil, though fifty degrees from each other. Both nations feasted on the flesh of their enemies, as on the produce of the chase. This is a custom that has not always prevailed; but it has been common to more than one nation, as we have shown in the foregoing pages.

In the frozen and barren climes of Canada men

were frequently cannibals; but they were not so in Acadia, which is a better country, and produces greater plenty of foods: nor in the rest of the continent, excepting only some parts of the Brazils and on the Caribbean islands.

The infant colony of Canada was formed by a few Jesuits and Huguenots, who had met together there by a strange fatality: they afterwards entered into an alliance with the Hurons, who were at war with the Iroquois. These latter did great damage to the colony, and took several Jesuits prisoners; and, as it is said, ate them. The settlement at Quebec suffered considerably from the English, who attacked it almost as soon as it was built and fortified. They afterwards made themselves masters of all Acadia, which indeed was doing little more than destroying a few fishermen's huts.

The French then had no foreign settlement at that time, either in Asia or America.

The company of merchants who had ruined themselves by these projects, hoping to repair their losses, applied to Cardinal Richelieu to be included in the treaty made with the English at St. Germain. The latter consented to restore the little they had taken, and of which they made small account; and this little became New France. This settlement continued a long time in a deplorable condition, save only that the codfishery brought in some little profits which served to support the company. But as soon as the English were apprised of these small profits, they seized Acadia again.

They restored it by the Treaty of Breda. After

that they took it five several times, and at length made it their property by the Treaty of Utrecht; a treaty which, though regarded as a happy event at the time it was made, has since proved most fatal to the peace of Europe: for we shall see that the ministers who drew it up, not having properly determined the limits of Acadia, which the English have endeavored to enlarge, and the French to confine; this corner of the world has proved the subject of a furious war, which broke out between the rival nations in 1755, and drew along with it the war in Germany, with which it had no kind of connection. But so complicated are the political interests of the present times, that a shot fired in America shall be the signal for setting all Europe together by the ears.

The French, in 1713, remained in possession of the little island of Cape Breton, on which is Louisburg; the river St. Lawrence, Quebec, and Canada —possessions which were rather useful, by being a nursery for seamen, than profitable in any other respects. Quebec contained about seven thousand inhabitants; but the war carried on by the government to preserve this country cost more than the country itself will ever be worth, and yet it appeared absolutely necessary.

New France is an immense tract of country, which joins on one side to Canada, and on the other to New Mexico; and whose limits toward the northeast are not known. This country is called the Mississippi, from a river of that name, which falls into the gulf of Mexico; and Louisiana, from the name of Louis XIV.

This tract of land lay convenient for the Spaniards; but having already too large an extent of dominion in America, they neglected the possession of it; and the more so, as it produced no gold. Some French belonging to Canada undertook to travel into this country, partly by land, and partly by sailing along the Illinois river; in which trial they underwent the most shocking hardships and fatigues. It was as if you were to go to Egypt around the Cape of Good Hope, instead of taking the route of Damietta. This extensive part of New France, till 1708, was peopled only by about a dozen families, who led a wandering life, in the midst of deserts and woods.

Louis XIV., who at that time was ready to sink under his misfortunes, and saw Old France on the point of falling to ruin, could not think of the New. The state was exhausted of men and money; and here it may not be improper to observe, that, during these times of public calamity, two men acquired fortunes of nearly forty millions each; one by a great private trade he carried on in the East Indies, while that company which had been established by Colbert was entirely ruined; and the other, by lending money to an unsuccessful, necessitous, and ignorant ministry. This great merchant, whose name was Crozat, was rich and venturous enough to risk a part of his fortune to purchase a grant of Louisiana from the king, on condition that every ship that he or his partners should send thither should carry over six young persons of each sex, in order to

people the country, where trade and population were equally at a stand.

After the death of Louis XIV., Law, a Scotchman, a very extraordinary person, many of whose schemes had proved useless, and others hurtful to the nation, made the government and the people believe that Louisiana produced as much gold as Peru, and that it would soon be able to supply as great a quantity of silk as China. This was the first epoch of Law's famous scheme, called the "Mississippi Scheme." Several colonies were sent to that country, and a plan was drawn of a magnificent and regular city, to be built there, by the name of New Orleans. The settlers almost all perished from want; and the city was confined to a few paltry houses. Perhaps one day, when France shall have a million or two of inhabitants more than she may know what to do with, it may be of some advantage to her to people Louisiana.

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## THE FRENCH ISLANDS, AND THE BUCCANEERS, OR FREEBOOTERS.

The most important possessions that the French have acquired at different times, are, one-half of the island of San Domingo, the islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and some of the Lesser Antilles; which is not the two-hundredth part of what the Spaniards have got by their conquests; but these have, however, turned out to great advantage.

San Domingo is that very island Hispaniola—by the natives called Haiti—which was discovered by Columbus, and depopulated by the Spaniards; the French have not been able to find on that part of the island which they inhabit, the gold and silver formerly found there; this may happen either from metals requiring a long succession of ages to be formed, or, what seems more probable, that there is only a certain quantity contained in the bowels of the earth, and that a mine, when once exhausted, is never recruited; and indeed, when we consider that gold and silver are not mixed metals, it is difficult to say how they can be reproduced. There are still mines of these metals in that part of the country which is under the dominion of the Spaniards; but as the expense exceeds the profits, they have left off working them.

It was to the desperate boldness of a new people, formed by hazard out of English, Bretons, and Normans, that the French are indebted for sharing any part of this island with the Spaniards. These people, who were called buccaneers, or freebooters, had nearly the same origin and association as the ancient Romans; but their courage was more impetuous and terrible. Figure to yourself a company of tigers endowed with some portion of human reason, and you will then have a true idea of these buccaneers. Their history is as follows:

It happened, about 1625, that some adventurers from France and England landed at the same time on one of the Caribbean islands, called St. Christopher by the Spaniards, who always gave the name

of some saint to every place they invaded, and butchered the natives in the name of that saint. These newcomers found themselves obliged, notwithstanding the natural antipathy of the two nations, to unite against the Spaniards, who, being masters of all the neighboring islands, as well as of the continent, soon came upon them with a force greatly superior to theirs. The French chief made his escape, and returned to France. The English commander capitulated. The most resolute of both French and English got over to the island of San Domingo by the help of some barks, and fixed their residence in an inaccessible part of that island, surrounded by rocks. There they built some small canoes resembling those of the American Indians, and made themselves masters of the island of Tortuga; whither several Normans went over to join them, as they did in the twelfth century, to make the conquest of Apulia, and that of England in the tenth. These people met with all the vicissitudes of good and bad fortune that must naturally attend a set of lawless adventurers, assembled together from Normandy and England, on the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1655, Cromwell fitted out a fleet which took the Island of Jamaica from the Spaniards. This expedition would not have succeeded but for the assistance of these buccaneers. They cruised upon all nations indiscriminately, and being more taken up with the search after plunder than the care of defending themselves, they suffered the Spaniards to make themselves masters of the Island of Tortuga during one of their cruises. However, they soon re-

covered it again; and the French ministry were obliged to appoint the person whom they chose governor of the island. They infested all the Gulf of Mexico, and had lurking-places in several of the little islands thereabouts. They assumed the name of "Brothers of the coast." Stowed in a heap in a pitiful canoe, that a single shot from a great gun, or the least gale of wind would have blown to atoms, they boldly boarded Spanish ships of the largest burden, and frequently made them their own. They knew no other law but that of equally distributing the share of the spoils; no other religion but that of nature; and even from that, they frequently deviated in an abominable manner.

They had it not in their power to steal wives for themselves, as history tells us the companions of Romulus did; but they procured a hundred young women from France: this number, however, was far from being sufficient to keep up a society, which was so numerous. Two buccaneers therefore cast dice for one woman; he that won married her; and the loser had no right to lie with her, unless the other was absent, or employed elsewhere.

These people seemed formed rather to destroy than to found a state. They performed unheard-of exploits, and were guilty of incredible cruelties. One man—named l'Olonois, from the island of Olonne, his birthplace—ventured into the port of Havana with a single canoe, and cut out an armed frigate. Upon examining one of the prisoners on board, the man confessed that this frigate was fitted out purposely to sail in search of him, and, if possible, to

take and hang him; adding further, that he himself was to have been his executioner. On hearing this, l'Olonois, without further delay, ordered the fellow to be hanged up, cut off the heads of all the other prisoners with his own hand and drank their blood.

This l'Olonois, and one of his companions named le Basque, marched at the head of five hundred buccaneers, as far as Venezuela, in the bay of Honduras, where they destroyed two towns with fire and sword, and returned loaded with booty. This success enabled them to equip the vessels which had been taken by their canoes, with cannon and all other necessaries, so that they suddenly beheld themselves a maritime power, and on the point of being great conquerors.

Morgan, a native of England, who has left a famous name behind him, put himself at the head of a thousand buccaneers, partly of his own nation, and partly Normans, Bretons, and natives of Saintonge, and Basque, with whom he undertook to get possession of Porto Bello, the magazine of the riches of Spain, a city of great strength, and defended by a number of cannon, and a considerable garrison. Morgan arrived before it without any artillery, scaled the walls of the citadel in spite of the enemy's fire, and, notwithstanding the most obstinate resistance, made himself master of it. By this successful temerity, he obliged the city to purchase its ransom of him for a million of piastres. Some time afterward, he had the boldness to land on the Isthmus of Panama, in the midst of the Spanish troops; forced his way to the ancient city of Panama, carried

off all the treasures lodged there, burned the city to the ground, and returned to Jamaica victorious and enriched. This man, who was only the son of a poor peasant in England, might have erected a kingdom to himself in America; but after all his exploits, he ended his days in prison in London.

The French buccaneers, whose place of retreat was sometimes among the rocks of San Domingo, and at others in the island of Tortuga, fitted out six armed boats, and with about twelve hundred men, attacked Vera Cruz, an undertaking as great as if twelve hundred men from Biscay should come and lay siege to Bordeaux with ten boats. However, they took the place by storm, and brought away five millions in species, and about fifteen hundred slaves. At length, made bold by a multitude of successes of this kind, they determined, French and English, to enter the South Sea, and make themselves masters of Peru. No Frenchman had at that time ever seen the South Sea, and there was no way to get to it but by crossing the mountains of the Isthmus of Panama, or by sailing all along the coast of South America, and passing the Straits of Magellan, to which they were strangers. However, they divided themselves into two parties, and set out at the same time in the two different routes.

Those who crossed the isthmus plundered and destroyed all that came in their way, and at length arrived on the borders of the South Sea, made themselves masters of some barks they found in the harbors, and awaited the arrival of their companions, who were to pass the Straits of Magellan. These

latter, who were almost all French, after having undergone adventures as romantic as their enterprise, were not able to get to Peru through the straits, being blown back by tempests, which drove them upon the coast of Africa, where they landed, and plundered all the inhabitants along shore.

In the meantime, those who had made the South Sea across the isthmus, having only open boats to sail in, were pursued by the Spanish flotilla from Peru. How were they to escape? One of their companions, who commanded a kind of canoe with about fifty men aboard, made the best of his way into the Vermillion Sea, and got on shore in California, where he remained four years; he afterward returned through the South Sea; in his passage he took a ship with five hundred thousand piastres on board, passed the Straits of Magellan, and arrived safe at Jamaica with his booty.

The others returned to the isthmus loaded with gold and precious stones. The Spanish troops assembled on all sides, and pursued them. This obliged them to cross the isthmus in its widest part, and to march round about for the space of three hundred leagues; whereas there are not over eighty in a right line, from the place where they were, to that whither they were going. In their journey they were frequently stopped by cataracts, which they were obliged to descend in machines made like a tub. They had to struggle with hunger and thirst, the elements, and their enemies the Spaniards. At length, however, they arrived at the North Sea, with what part of their treasure they had been able to

save. Their number was, by this time, decreased to five hundred. The retreat of the ten thousand Greeks will be always more famous in history, but certainly is not to be compared with this.

If these adventurers could have been all united under one chief, they might have formed a formidable state in America; but their enterprises were chiefly confined to doing the Spaniards almost as much hurt as the Spaniards had formerly done to the American natives. Part of them returned to their own countries, to enjoy their riches in peace; others died of the excesses resulting from those riches; and a great many were soon reduced to their original indigence. The governments of France and England ceased to countenance or protect them, when they had no longer any occasion for their assistance; and at present nothing remains of these heroic robbers, but the remembrance of their valor and cruelty.

It is to them that France is indebted for one-half of the island of San Domingo; and it was by their arms that she was maintained in possession of it during the time of their cruises.

In 1757 they reckoned thirty thousand persons in that part of San Domingo belonging to the French, besides one hundred thousand slaves, blacks and mulattoes, who worked in the several plantations of sugar, cocoa, and indigo; and who sacrificed their lives and healths to please those newly-acquired wants and appetites, which were unknown to our forefathers. We send for these negroes to the coast of Guinea, and to the Gold and Ivory coasts. I do

not know what the present price may be; but about thirty years ago a good negro could be bought for fifty livres, which is about five times less than what we pay for a fat ox. We tell them with one breath that they are men like us, and that they are redeemed by the blood of a God, who was crucified for them; and the next we set them to work like beasts of burden, and feed them worse. If they attempt to make their escape, we cut off one of their legs, and after having supplied its place with a wooden one, we make them turn a sugar-mill by hand; and yet shall we pretend, after all this, to talk of the law of nations?

The little islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe yield the same commodities as San Domingo. These islands, and the events that have happened in them, are mere points in the history of the universe; but, after all, these countries, though hardly perceptible in a map of the world, produced in France an annual circulation of nearly sixty millions in merchandise. This trade does not enrich a country; far from it, for it is the cause of many shipwrecks, and the loss of a number of lives. Therefore it certainly cannot be looked on as a real good; but as mankind have made new wants for themselves, it prevents the kingdom from purchasing at a dear rate from foreigners, a superfluity that has, by this means, become a necessity.

## POSSESSIONS OF THE ENGLISH AND DUTCH IN AMERICA.

The English, who, being islanders, are necessarily more practised in sea affairs than the French, have acquired more advantageous settlements in North America than the latter. They are in possession of about six hundred leagues of coast from Carolina to Hudson's Bay, by which they have long but vainly endeavored to find a passage into the South Seas, and so to Japan. The English settlements in America were not nearly so valuable as those of the Spaniards; the former having produced, at least hitherto, neither gold, silver, indigo, cochineal, precious stones, nor woods for dyeing; and yet they have proved very advantageous to the possessors. The English territories begin about ten degrees from our tropic, in a most delightful country called Carolina. Here the French have never been able to effect any settlement; and the English did not take possession of it till they had secured the coast to the northward.

You have seen the Spaniards and Portuguese masters of almost all the New World, from the Straits of Magellan to Florida: next to Florida is Carolina, to which the English have of late years added another part to the southward, called Georgia, from the name of their king, George I. They have been in possession of Carolina ever since 1664. That which bestows the greatest lustre on this province is its having received its laws from the admirable Locke: a perfect liberty of conscience, and a

universal toleration in point of religion, form the basis of these laws. Here the Episcopals live in brotherly union with the Puritans; they even permit the Catholics, their natural enemies, to exercise their religion undisturbed, as also the Indians, who are called idolaters; but the laws require that there shall be seven heads of families to establish any particular sect or religion within that government. Locke wisely considered that seven families, with their slaves, might amount to about six hundred souls, and that it would be an act of injustice to deprive such a number of persons from serving God in their own way; and that under such a restraint they might be tempted to quit the colony.

Marriages in one-half of this country are performed only in the presence of a magistrate; but those who have an inclination to add the benediction of the priest to this civil contract, may have that satisfaction.

These laws were received with admiration, after the torrents of blood that had been shed throughout all Europe, by the spirit of enthusiasm and persecution. But they were laws that would never have entered into the imagination of either the Greeks or Romans, as they could never have conceived that there would be a time in which men would force one another to embrace a particular faith, sword in hand. By this humane code it is ordered, that the negroes shall be treated with the same humanity as domestic servants. In the year 1657, there were in the province of Carolina forty thousand blacks, and twenty thousand whites.

Beyond Carolina is Virginia, a colony so named in honor of the virgin queen Elizabeth, and first peopled by the famous Raleigh, who afterward met with so cruel a return for all his public-spirited labor, from James I. It cost immense pains to settle this colony; for the savage natives, who were a more warlike people than the Mexicans, and who saw themselves as unjustly attacked, almost totally destroyed it at its first establishment.

It has been said, that since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which impolitic step added thousands of subjects to both worlds, at the expense of France, the number of inhabitants in Virginia have amounted to one hundred and forty thousand, without reckoning the negroes. In this province and in Maryland they apply themselves chiefly to the culture of tobacco, which forms an immense branch of trade, and is another of our new artificial wants, which did not crop up till lately, and which has now grown powerful by example; as you may perceive, when I tell you that it was looked on as the greatest impoliteness at the court of Louis XIV., for any one to thrust this dirty, stimulating dust up his nose. The first tobacco farm in France, which did not bring in to the proprietors above three hundred thousand livres a year, at present is worth sixteen millions. The French lay out very nearly four millions a year in this weed, with the English colonies, when they themselves might plant it in Louisiana: and here I cannot forbear remarking that France and England at present consume, in commodities unknown to

their forefathers, more than the whole revenues of both crowns were formerly worth.

To the northward of Virginia is the province of Maryland, containing forty thousand white people and about sixty thousand blacks. Beyond this lies Pennsylvania, a country differing from all the rest of the world by the singular manners of its inhabitants. This country received its name and laws, in 1680, from one William Penn, the head of a new sect, which have very improperly been called Quakers. This was not an usurped power, as were most of those invasions which we have seen both in the old and new world. Penn purchased these lands of the real natives, and became a lawful proprietor in the most rigid sense of the word. The Christian doctrine, which he carried along with him there, differs as much from that acknowledged in every other part of Europe, as his colony does from every other colony. He and his companions professed the same simplicity and equality which prevailed among the primitive disciples of Christ. They knew no other religious tenet but those which proceeded extempore from the lips, and which were all confined to the love of God and their fellow-creatures. They did not admit baptism, because Christ baptized no one. They had no priest, because Christ Himself was the only teacher and pastor of His first disciples. Here I perform only the duty of a faithful historian, and shall further add, that if Penn and his followers erred in their theology—that inexhaustible source of misfortunes and disputes—they at least excelled all other people in the strictness of their morals.

Though situated in the midst of twelve small nations, whom we term savages, they have never had the least dispute with any of them; on the contrary, these have always looked on them in the light of fathers and arbitrators. Penn and his primitive followers, who are called Quakers, but to whom we ought to give no other title than that of "the upright," made it a maxim never to go to war with any one, nor to law with each other. They had no judges among them, but only arbitrators, who settled all differences in law in an amicable manner, and without expense. They had no physicians, for they were a sober people, and consequently did not stand in need of them.

The province of Pennsylvania was for a long time without soldiers, till the government of late years, while at war with France, sent some regiments over from England for the defence of this country. Take away the name of Quakers, and that barbarous and disagreeable habit of throwing their bodies into a variety of ridiculous convulsions in their religious assemblies, and it must be confessed that there is not a more venerable society of men in the world. Their colony is as flourishing as their manners are pure. Philadelphia, or the City of the Brethren, which is their capital, is one of the most beautiful cities in the universe; and in 1740 contained eighty thousand souls. But the inhabitants are not all Quakers, half of them consisting of Germans, Swedes, and other nations, which altogether form seventeen different religions; and yet the Quakers, who have the chief government, treat them all as brethren.

Beyond this singular spot of the globe, where affrighted peace has sheltered herself, when chased from every other part, we come to New England, whose capital is Boston, the richest city on all that coast.

This city was at first peopled and governed by Puritans, who had fled from the persecution raised against them in England by the famous Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, whose head afterward paid for his persecutions, and whose fate was a prelude to that of his weak and unfortunate master, Charles I. These Puritans, who were a kind of Calvinists, took refuge in this country, afterward called New England, in 1620; and it might be said of them and the Episcopal party who persecuted them in England, that they were tigers who made war upon bears; for these latter brought over with them to America their gloomy and morose disposition, by which they miserably harassed the pacific Pennsylvanians when they came first to settle near them. But in 1692 these Puritans proved a heavy scourge to themselves, by the most unaccountable epidemic madness that ever possessed the human race.

At the time when Europe was beginning to emerge from the abyss of horrible superstition and ignorance in which it had been plunged for such a number of ages; and witchcraft and the power of evil spirits was no longer regarded in England and other civilized nations except as ancient prejudices and follies at which all reasonable men blushed; the Puritans revived them in America. A young woman happened to be seized with convul-

sions in 1692, a public speaker accused an old maid-servant in the family of having bewitched her, and the poor old woman was obliged to confess herself a witch. Upon this half of the inhabitants believed themselves bewitched, and accused the other half of the black art; the populace rose and threatened to hang the judges if they did not order the accused persons to be hanged. Thus for two years nothing was talked of but witchcraft, witches, and hanging; and they were countrymen of the great Locke and Newton who were seized with this madness. At length the malady abated, and the people of New England, having come to their senses, were amazed and ashamed at their outrageous folly. They now applied themselves to trade and husbandry, and their colony soon became the most flourishing of any; insomuch that in 1750 it contained nearly one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, which is ten times the number that the French have in their settlements.

From New England we come to New York, or Acadia, which has been the subject of so much discord and bloodshed; and Newfoundland, where the great codfishery is carried on; and then, after having sailed some way to the eastward, we arrive at Hudson's Bay, by which it has been vainly hoped to find out a shorter passage to the extremities of the eastern and western hemispheres.

The islands which the English possess in America have proved almost as profitable to them as their continent. Jamaica, Barbados, and some others, where they grow sugar, have turned out exceed-

ingly profitable, not only on account of their own manufactures, but of the trade carried on from them with New Spain, which is so much the more advantageous, as it is prohibited.

The Dutch, who are so powerful in the East Indies, are hardly known in America; the little colony of Surinam, in the neighborhood of the Brazils, being the only territory of any consequence that they are possessed of in that part of the world. Thither they have carried the genius of their country, which is to cut their lands into canals. They have made a New Amsterdam at Surinam, as well as at Batavia, and the island of Curaçoa yields them a considerable profit. Lastly, the Danes have of late been possessed of three small islands, and have opened a very beneficial trade, through the encouragement their king has given them.

This is all that the Europeans have done of any consequence, at present, in this fourth part of the globe.

There yet remains a fifth, which is that of the *Terra Australis,* or Antarctic land, of which only a small part of the seacoast and some few islands have, as yet, been discovered. If we comprehend under the name of this new southern world Papua or New Guinea, which begins even under the equator, it is evident that this part of the world is by far the most extensive of any.

Magellan discovered the Antarctic land, in 1520, lying in fifty-one degrees south declination; but these frozen climes proved no temptation to the masters of Peru. Since that time several immense

countries have been discovered to the southward of the Indies, and in particular New Holland, which stretches from the tenth to the thirtieth degree. The Dutch Batavia company are said to be in possession of several prosperous settlements in this country; but it is not very easy to carry on a trade, and be masters of whole provinces unknown to the rest of the world. It is not unlikely that this fifth portion of the globe may yet be visited by some new adventurers, from whom we may learn that nature has not neglected these climes; that she exhibits her usual variety and profusion in them, as well as throughout the rest of the world.

But hitherto we know little or nothing of these immense countries, except that they are some wild and uncultivated coasts where Pelsart and his companions, in 1630, found black men who walked on their hands as upon feet; a bay where Tasman, in 1642, was attacked by a people with yellow complexions, armed with clubs and arrows; and another where Dampier, in 1649, had an engagement with a race of negroes who had no fore teeth in their upper jaws. We have not yet penetrated into this segment of the globe; and it must be confessed, that it is better to improve and cultivate our own countries than to go in search of the frozen regions and motley-colored animals of the southern pole.

## ON PARAGUAY.

OF THE POWER OF THE JESUITS IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD, AND OF THEIR DISPUTES WITH THE SPANIARDS AND PORTUGUESE.

THE conquests of Mexico and of Peru are prodigies of human boldness; the cruelties which were exercised there, and the total extirpation of the inhabitants of San Domingo and some other islands, the utmost stretch of human barbarity; but the settlement of Paraguay, established by only a few Spanish Jesuits, appears the triumph of humanity, and seems in some measure to make atonement for the cruelties of the first conquerors. The Quakers of America, and the Jesuits of Paraguay, have exhibited a new spectacle to the world. The former have softened the rugged manners of the savages bordering on Pennsylvania; they have won them to instruction by the mere force of example, without making any attempt on their liberties; and have procured them new conveniences of life by making them acquainted with trade. The Jesuits have indeed made use of religion to deprive the inhabitants of Paraguay of their liberties; but, on the other hand, they have civilized them, have taught them to be industrious, and have succeeded in governing a vast country, in the same manner as a convent is governed in Europe. Upon examination, the Quakers appear to have acted the most justly, and the Jesuits the most politically. The former considered the attempt to subject their neighbors in the light of

a crime; the latter made a virtue of subduing savages by mildness and instruction.

Paraguay is a vast country, lying between Brazil, Peru, and Chili. The Spaniards, who made themselves masters of this coast, founded the city of Buenos Ayres, a place of great trade on the River la Plata; but with all their power they were too few in number to conquer the swarms of natives that dwelt in the midst of the forests, and whom, however, it was necessary to subject, in order to facilitate to themselves a passage from Buenos Ayres to Peru. In this conquest, the Jesuits assisted them much more effectually than their soldiers could have done. These missionaries penetrated by degrees into the heart of the country in the seventeenth century. Some of the savage natives, who had been taken when young, and bred up in Buenos Ayres, served them as guides and interpreters. The fatigues and labors they underwent equalled, if not exceeded, those of the conquerors of the new world. The courage inspired by religion is at least as great as that which actuates the warrior in pursuit of fame. They were discouraged by no difficulties, and at length they succeeded in the following manner:

The cows, sheep, and oxen, which had been brought from Europe to Buenos Ayres, having multiplied prodigiously, they took a great number of these with them, as likewise several wagon-loads of all kinds of instruments of husbandry and architecture. They sowed some plains which they found on their way with several sorts of European grain,

and made a present of the whole to the savages, whom they thus lured to their purpose, as animals are caught with a bait. These nations consisted only of a number of families, who lived separate from each other, without society, or the knowledge of religion. They were, however, soon brought into the former, by having new wants given them from the new productions with which they were supplied. The missionaries in the next place, with the assistance of some of the inhabitants of Buenos Ayres, endeavored to teach them to sow and till the ground, make bricks, hew timber, and build houses. In a short time, these wild and uncivilized people were wholly transformed, and became useful and obedient subjects to their benefactors; and though they did not immediately become proselytes to Christianity, the doctrine of which was above their comprehension, their children, by being bred up in that religion, soon became thorough Christians.

This settlement in its beginning, consisted only of fifty families, which, in 1750, were increased to a hundred thousand. The Jesuits, in the space of one century, have formed thirty cantons, to which they have given the name of the Country of the Missions. Each canton at present contains ten thousand inhabitants. One father, Florentine, a Franciscan friar, who was at Paraguay, in 1711, and who in every page of his narrative, expresses his admiration of this new government, says that the village of St. Xavier, in which he lived a considerable time, contained at least thirty thousand souls; from which

we may conclude, with some degree of certainty, that the Jesuits have raised more than four hundred thousand subjects by mere persuasion.

If anything can give us a clear idea of this colony, it is the ancient Lacedæmonian government. All things are in common in Paraguay; and the use of gold and silver is unknown to these people, though bordering on the mines of Peru. The essential character of a Spartan was obedience to the laws of Lycurgus; that of an inhabitant of Paraguay has hitherto been obedience to the laws of the Jesuits: in a word, there seems to be a perfect resemblance between the two people, save only, that those of Paraguay have no slaves to till their lands, or hew their timber, as the Spartans had; but are themselves slaves to the Jesuits.

This country is indeed dependent in spiritual matters on the bishop of Buenos Ayres, and in temporals, on the governor of that city. It is also subject to the king of Spain, in like manner as the provinces of La Plata and Chili; but the Jesuits, the original founders of this colony, have always maintained an absolute government over the people they organized. They gave the king of Spain a piastre a head for each of their subjects; and this they pay to the governor of Buenos Ayres, either in money or commodities; they only are possessed of the former, for the subjects never touch it. This is the only mark of vassalage which the Spanish government has thought requisite to demand of them. But the governor of Buenos Ayres cannot appoint any person to any office, either military or civil, in

the Jesuits' country; nor can the bishop send so much as a parish priest thither.

An attempt was once made to send two curates to the villages of Our Lady of Faith and St. Ignatius, and they even took the precaution to send a guard of soldiers with them; but the people of both villages quitted their habitations, and divided themselves among the other cantons; and the two curates, finding themselves left alone, returned to Buenos Ayres.

Another bishop, incensed at hearing of this affront, which had been put on his predecessor, resolved to establish the customary church government throughout the Country of Missions. For this purpose, he invited all the clergy in his jurisdiction to repair to him on a day appointed, in order to receive their respective charges; but no one dared to appear. We have this fact related by the Jesuits themselves, in one of their memorials, which they published. Thus, then, they commenced absolute masters in spiritual affairs, and no less so in the civil. They, indeed, allow a passage through their country to the officers that the governor sends to Peru; but those officers are not permitted to stay over three days in the country, during which time they must not converse with any of the inhabitants; and though they come in the king's name, they are treated exactly like foreigners, who are suspected of being spies. The Jesuits, who have always been careful to preserve appearances, make use of religion as a pretext to justify this behavior, which might be construed into disobedience and contempt. And

they declared to the Council of the Indies, at Madrid, that they could not consent to receive a Spaniard into their provinces, lest he should corrupt the manners of the natives; and this reason, which carries with it such an insult on their own country, has been admitted as satisfactory by the kings of Spain, who could not hope for any assistance from the Paraguayans; but on this extraordinary condition, which is a reproach and disgrace to a nation so proud and tenacious of their honor as the Spaniards.

The form of government in this nation, the only one of its kind in the known world, is as follows: The provincial, or Jesuit-governor, with the assistance of his council, frames the laws; and each rector, assisted by another council, takes care that they are observed; a person is chosen from among the body of inhabitants of each canton, as a justice of the peace, and has under him a lieutenant. These two officers go round their district every day, and give an account to the superior of whatever passes.

Every village carries on some manufactory; and the workmen in each profession meet together, and perform their occupations in common, and in the presence of their overseers, who are appointed by the fiscal. The Jesuits furnish the hemp, cotton, and flax, which the inhabitants work up. They also give out the grain to be sown, which is reaped in common; and the whole produce of the harvest deposited in the public magazines, whence each family is supplied with what it wants for its subsistence, and the remainder is sold at Buenos Ayres, or Peru.

The Paraguayans keep flocks; they raise corn,

pease, indigo, cotton, hemp, sugar-canes, jalap, ipecac, and a plant called Paraguay grass, which is a kind of tea, greatly esteemed in South America, and of which they make a considerable traffic. These commodities are returned in goods and specie; the former the Jesuits distribute among the inhabitants, and the gold and silver they make use of to decorate their churches, and to answer the calls of the government. Each canton has an arsenal or military storehouse, from which on certain days they give out arms to such of the inhabitants as know how to make use of them. A Jesuit superintends the exercise, which is performed in a regular manner, and after it is over, the arms are all returned again into the store, no inhabitant being allowed to keep arms in his house. The same principle which has made these people the most tractable of all subjects, has likewise made them excellent soldiers. They fight as they obey, from a belief that it is their duty. Their assistance has been more than once necessary against the Portuguese of Brazil, the banditti, who are known by the name of Mamelukes, and the Mosquito savages, who were a race of cannibals. They have always been headed by Jesuits in these expeditions, and have always fought with courage, order, and success.

In the year 1662, when the Spaniards laid siege to the city of St. Sacrament, of which the Portuguese had made themselves masters, and which gave birth to such extraordinary accidents, a Jesuit brought four thousand Paraguayans to the assistance of the former, who scaled the walls of the

town, and entered the place sword in hand. And here I must not omit one circumstance, which will show that these monks, who were used to command, understood their business much better than the governor of Buenos Ayres, who was at the head of the Spanish forces. This general, when the assault was going to be made, gave orders for placing a rank of horses in front of the men, in order, that the cannon from the enemy's ramparts having spent their fire on these creatures, the soldiers might advance with less danger; but the Jesuit, who headed the Paraguayans, represented the folly and danger of such a scheme, and ordered the place to be attacked in the usual way.

The manner in which these people fought for the Spaniards showed that they would not be at a loss to defend themselves on occasion, and that it would be dangerous to attempt to make any change in their government. It is certain that the Jesuits have already formed to themselves an empire in Paraguay, of about four hundred leagues in circumference, and that they have it in their power to add to its extent.

Though vassals, in all appearance, to the crown of Spain, they are in effect kings, and perhaps the best obeyed of any kings on earth. They have been at once founders, legislators, pontiffs, and sovereigns.

A government with a constitution altogether so new and extraordinary, and established in another hemisphere, is an effect perhaps the most distant from its cause that was ever known to the world. We have for some time seen priests possessed of

sovereign authority in Europe; but they attained to this rank, which seems so opposite to their real condition, by a gradual and natural progression. They obtained considerable lands, and these lands, like most others, have in time become fiefs and principalities. But the Jesuits had nothing given them in Paraguay; and they have made themselves absolute sovereigns, without even pretending to be proprietors of a foot of land. In a word, everything has been of their own creation.

But having at length abused their power, they have lost a great part of it; for when the crown of Spain ceded the city of St. Sacrament, together with its vast dependencies, to the Portuguese, the Jesuits had the boldness to oppose this convention; the people they governed would not consent to be under the Portuguese government, and for some time resisted their old and new masters.

If we may credit the *"Relacio Abbreviada,"* the Portuguese general, d'Andrado, wrote to the Spanish general, Valdareos, in 1750, in these terms: "The Jesuits are the only rebels. Their Indians have twice attacked the Portuguese fort of Pardo, with a considerable train of artillery." The same narrative adds that the Indians cut off the heads of their prisoners, and carried them to their commanders, the Jesuits. Although this charge may be true, it does not seem probable.

It is however certain, that in 1757, there was an insurrection in one of their provinces called St. Nicholas, when some mutineers took the field, to the number of thirteen thousand, under the command

of two Jesuits named Lamp and Tadeo; and this gave rise to a report, which was generally believed, that one of the Jesuits had caused himself to be proclaimed king of Paraguay, having assumed the name of Nicholas I.

While the monks of this order were carrying on a war against the kings of Spain and Portugal, in America, their brethren in Europe were the confessors of those very kings. But of late we have seen them accused of rebellion, and an intent to murder their lawful king in Lisbon, entirely driven out of Portugal in the year 1758, and violently persecuted at the court of Madrid. The Portuguese government have cleared all their American colonies of them; but they still remain masters of all that part of Paraguay which belongs to Spain, where it is difficult to get at them, and where they still continue to share the sovereign authority with the crown of Spain, over an immense tract of country. This is an example hitherto not paralleled in the history of the universe. It will be the subject of some future pages to show why the whole earth seems to have taken up arms against them, and why the see of Rome alone has declared herself their protectress.

## THE CHANGES THAT HAVE HAPPENED IN OUR GLOBE.

AND THE PETRIFICATIONS WHICH ARE ALLEGED AS PROOF THEREOF; WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN ITALIAN, AND SENT BY THE AUTHOR TO THE ACADEMY OF BOLOGNA, AND SINCE TRANSLATED BY HIM INTO FRENCH.

THERE are certain errors which belong alone to the common people; there are others which are confined to philosophers. In this latter class we may perhaps rank the notion which prevails among the generality of natural philosophers, that the earth almost everywhere affords proofs of a once total submersion. In the mountains of Hesse, there has been found a stone which had the impression of a turbot, and a petrified pike was found in one of the Alps. From this it has been taken for granted, that the mountains we now see have been formerly covered with seas and rivers; whereas it is much more natural to suppose that these fish had been brought thither by some traveller, who, finding them spoiled, threw them away, and, in process of time they became petrified; but this notion would have been too simple, and not have left sufficient room for hypothesis. Ay! but a ship's anchor has been found upon one of the mountains of Switzerland! Indeed! and might it not have been brought there like many other heavy burdens, and even as cannon have been, by hand, and afterward used to stop some very weighty load from sliding down the declivity of the rock; or might not this very anchor have been

brought from the little seaport in the lake of Geneva; or, after all, may not the story itself of the anchor be false? Undoubtedly; but then it has been thought more proper to affirm that this was the anchor of some vessel that had been moored in Switzerland before the deluge.

There is some resemblance between the tongue of a sea-dog and a stone called *glossopetra.* This is enough to persuade a naturalist that these stones have been all tongues of sea-dogs left in the Apennines in Noah's time. Why do they not, at the same time, affirm that the shells called *conchæ veneris* are the very things whose names they bear?

Almost all reptiles are of a spiral form when not in motion; and it is nothing wonderful, that, when they are petrified, they should retain the same uncouth figure; and it is altogether natural for stones themselves to be formed in this shape; the Alps and the Vosges are full of such. Now, it has pleased naturalists to give the name of *cornu Ammonis,* or Ammon's horn, to these stones; and they pretend to discover therein the fish called the nautilus, which they never saw, and which is said to be bred in the Indian seas; and, without the trouble of examining whether this petrified body is a nautilus or an eel, they conclude that the Indian Sea has formerly overflowed the mountains of Europe.

There have been also found, in some of the provinces of France and Italy, certain small shells that are positively said to be natives of the Syrian Sea. I am in no disposition to contest their origin; but why may it not be remembered, that the innumer-

able crowds of pilgrims and Crusaders, who carried money into the Holy Land, brought back with them a number of shells? or is it more eligible to believe that the seas of Joppa and Sidon came and covered the whole country of Burgundy and the Milanese?

We might, indeed, choose whether we would credit either of these hypotheses; and rather think, with many naturalists, that these shells, that are supposed to have been transferred from such a distance, are fossils, which are produced by the earth in these climates. Again; we might, with an equal degree of probability, conjecture, that the places where these shells are found were formerly covered with lakes or collections of water: but whichever opinion or error we may adopt, these shells are by no means a proof that the whole universe has been turned upside down.

The hills about Calais and Dover are rocks of chalk: therefore these hills have been formerly undivided by water. The soil about Gibraltar and Tangiers is nearly of the same nature; therefore Africa and Europe were formerly joined, and there was no Mediterranean Sea. The Pyrenees, the Alps, and the Apennines, have been thought by several philosophers to be the ruins of a world that has undergone a number of changes. This opinion was strongly maintained by the whole Pythagorean school, as well as by many others. They likewise affirmed that the earth we at present inhabit was formerly a sea, and that the sea was for a long time dry land.

Ovid is known to have spoken the opinions of the

naturalists of the East, in the lines he puts into the mouth of Pythagoras:

> *Nil equidem durare sub imagine eadem*
> *Crediderim: sic ad ferrum venistis ab auro,*
> *Secula*, etc.—Metam. Book xv., ver. 259.

> That forms are changed, I grant; that nothing can
> Continue in the figure it began:
> The golden age to iron was debased, etc.

This was in fact the opinion of Pythagoras and the Indians, and it is doing him no injustice to relate it in verse. This opinion has gained particular credit by those heaps or beds of shells that are found under the ground in Calabria, Touraine, and other places at a considerable distance from the sea; and there is some reason to believe that they have been deposited there for a long succession of years.

The sea, which has retired several leagues from its ancient shores in some places, has in others made considerable encroachments upon the land. But from this almost imperceptible loss, many thought they had a right to conclude that the sea did for a long time cover the rest of the globe. Frejus, Narbonne, Ferrara, and some others, are no longer seaports; one half of the country of East Friesland was overflowed by the ocean; therefore it follows, that for several ages whales have sported upon Mount Taurus and the Alps, and man inhabited the bed of the ocean.

These hypotheses of the natural revolutions that have happened in this world has been strengthened in the minds of some philosophers by the discovery made by the chevalier de Louville, a famous astronomer, who, as is well known, in 1714, set out from

Marseilles on purpose to discover by observations whether an angle of the ecliptic with the equator was the same as it had been fixed by Pitheas about two thousand years before. He found it less by twenty minutes; that is to say, the ecliptic had, according to his observations, in the space of two thousand years, approached nearer to the equator by one-third of a degree: which proves, that in six thousand years it will be nearer by a whole degree.

This supposed, it is evident that the earth, besides its known motions, must have another, by which it is made to revolve round itself from one pole to another. It will be found, that in the space of twenty-three thousand years, the sun will continue for a great length of time on the equator; and, in a period of two millions of years, all the climates in the world will have been in their turns under the torrid and the frigid zones. But what occasion, you will say, to alarm oneself about what is to happen two millions of years hence? There is probably a much longer period between the positions of the planets, with regard to each other. We already know the earth has a motion which is completed in twenty-five thousand years, called the precession of the equinoxes. Revolutions of thousands of millions of years are infinitely less in the sight of the great architect of nature, than to us that of a wheel which completes its round in the twinkling of an eye. This new period, invented by the chevalier de Louville, which has been corrected and supported by several astronomers, has occasioned search to be made after the ancient Babylonian observations, transmitted to

the Greeks by Alexander, and preserved to posterity by Ptolemy in his "Almagest."

The Babylonians in Alexander's time pretended to have astronomical observations for upwards of four hundred thousand three hundred years. It was endeavored to reconcile these Babylonian calculations with the hypothesis of the revolution of two millions of years. At length, some philosophers concluded that, all the climates having been each in their turn under the pole and the equinoctial line, all the seas must likewise have changed places.

Extraordinary and great changes in nature are objects which will always please the imaginations of the wisest men. Philosophers are as fond of a change of scene in the universe, as the common people are of those on the stage. Our imagination, taking its flight from the point of existence and duration, launches into millions of ages, to contemplate with a secret pleasure Canada under the equator, and the seas of Nova Zembla covering the top of Mount Atlas.

A certain author, in his theory of the earth, a work more famous than instructive, pretends that the deluge submerged our whole globe, and from its ruins made the rocks and mountains we now see, and threw everything into a state of irreparable confusion; in short, he looks upon the universe as one great heap of ruins. The author of another theory, no less famous, sees nothing therein but the utmost order, and affirms, that, without the deluge, such noble harmony could never have subsisted; both

writers allow the mountains to be the consequences of a universal inundation.

Burnet, the first of these authors, tells us for certain in his fifth chapter, that before the deluge the earth was compact, regular, uniform, and without hills, valleys, or seas. According to him, the deluge caused all these; and this is a reason why we find the *cornua Ammonis* in the Apennine mountains.

Woodward, the other theorist, condescends to allow that there were mountains before the deluge; but it is very certain that it dissolved all the different metals, and formed others, and that this is the reason, why in this earth of ours, we so frequently find flints, that were softened by the water and appear full of petrified animals. Woodward might have been convinced, if he pleased, that water will not dissolve marble, flint, or like substances; and that the rocks which are constantly washed by the sea still retain their hardness; but no matter. His hypothesis required that the water should have a power of dissolving, in the space of one hundred and fifty days, all the stones and minerals in the world, to lodge a few oysters and periwinkles in them.

It would require more time than the waters continued upon the face of the earth to read all the authors who have formed hypotheses on this subject. Everyone of them destroys and remoulds the earth, in the same manner as Descartes has created his after his own fancy; for the greatest part of your philosophers put themselves without any ceremony in the place of the Deity, and imagine they can create a world at command.

Far be it from me to think of copying their example; I have not the vanity to conceive I shall ever be able to discover the means made use of by the Creator to form the world, to drown, or to preserve it. I confine myself to the Scripture, without attempting to explain it, or admitting of what it does not say. I only desire to be permitted to examine, according to the rules of probability, whether this globe either has been, or will one day be, entirely different from what it now is. And here we have nothing more to do than make use of our eyesight.

In the first place, I shall examine those mountains, which Doctor Burnet, and many others, look upon as the ruins of the old world scattered up and down, without order or design, like those ruins of a city bombarded by an enemy. And here I, on the contrary, perceive them to be disposed with infinite regularity, from one end of the world to the other. They are, in fact, a chain of high, inexhaustible aqueducts, which, by dividing in several places, make room for the entrance of rivers, and arms of the sea to moisten the earth.

From the Cape of Good Hope there runs a continuous chain of rocks, which stoop to give passage to the Niger and the Zaire, and then rise again under the name of Mount Atlas, while the Nile falls down from another branch of those mountains. A narrow arm of the sea separates Mount Atlas from the promontory of Gibraltar, and it is afterward joined to the Sierra Morena; this latter joins to the Pyrenees, these to the Cévennes, the Cévennes to the Alps, and the Alps to the Apennines, which run as

far as the kingdom of Naples; over against them are the mountains of Epirus and Thessaly. As soon as you have passed the Straits of Gallipoli, you meet with Mount Taurus, whose branches, under the names of Caucasus, Imaus, etc., stretch to the extremities of the globe. Thus the earth is crowned in every sense of the word, with these reservoirs of water, which furnish, without exception, all the rivers that bedew and fertilize it; nor does the sea furnish a single brook of its salt fluid to any one of its shores.

Burnet caused a map of the earth to be engraved, divided into mountains, instead of provinces. By this, and his representations, he endeavors all he can to give us an idea of the most terrible confusion; but, both his own map and his own words, do, in spite of himself, give us to understand the utmost harmony and utility. "The Andes," says he, "in America are a thousand leagues in length; the Taurus divides Asia into two parts, etc. Could any man take in these at one view, he would be perfectly convinced that the globe of the earth is more deformed than can be imagined." On the contrary, it is certain, that could any reasonable man at one view behold both hemispheres crossed by a regular chain of mountains, serving as reservoirs for the rains, and sources to the rivers; he must acknowledge, in all this pretended confusion, the wisdom and paternal care of a divine Being.

There is not one climate on the earth, without a mountain and a river springing from it. This chain of hills is an essential part in the great machine of

the world. Without them no terrestrial animal could live, for want of the water they furnish, which is drawn up out of the sea, and purified by a perpetual exhalation; this vapor is carried by the wind to the tops of the hills, whence it falls down again in rivers, and it is demonstrable that this exhalation is so great as to suffice both for forming rivers and furnishing rain.

Another hypothesis, which supposes that in the before-mentioned period of two millions of years, the axis of the earth, by continually rising upward, and revolving round itself, has forced the ocean out of its bed; this hypothesis, I say, is equally contrary to natural philosophy with the others. A motion by which the axis of the earth is elevated only ten minutes in a thousand years does not appear sufficiently violent to destroy the globe. This motion, supposing it really to exist, would certainly leave the mountains in their places; and, to say the truth, I do not see any appearance of the Alps, or Mount Caucasus having been brought to the places where they now are, either by degrees, or instantly from the coasts of Kaffraria.

But if, leaving the examination of the mountains, we consider the ocean alone, it will equally overturn this system. The bed of the ocean is hollow, and this vast basin grows deeper, in proportion to its distance from the shores. There is not a single rock in the main sea, if we except a few islands; now, if there was a time, when the ocean covered our mountains, and man and beast inhabited the bed of the sea, how was it possible for them to have sub-

sisted? What mountains had they then to furnish them with rivers? This requires a globe of quite a different nature from ours. And again, how could this globe have, at that time, revolved round itself, seeing that it was one-half hollow, and the other prominent; and this prominence loaded over and above with the whole weight of the ocean? How could the laws of gravity and hydrostatics be accomplished? or how could the ocean keep itself upon the mountains without sliding into that immense bed, which nature had formed for it? A world of a philosophical creation is generally a very ridiculous one.

I will suppose for an instant with those who admit that in the period of two millions of years we arrived at the point of time when the ecliptic falls in with the equator. I then suppose Italy, France, and Germany, to form the torrid zone; but we must not imagine that either then, or at any other time, the ocean can change its place: no motion of the earth can ever resist the laws of gravity, and in whatever manner our globe may turn, everything will press equally upon the centre. The universal system of mechanics is invariably the same.

No system, no hypothesis, then, can give the least degree of probability to the generally received notion that our globe has changed its appearance; that the ocean did for a long time cover the earth which we now inhabit; and that mankind formerly dwelt in those places that now serve as habitations for porpoises and whales. Nothing has been changed of the animal or vegetable world; the species have all

remained unalterably the same, and it would be very strange that a grain of millet should retain its nature forever, and yet the whole globe be subject to such changes.

What I have here said of the ocean may be said likewise of the Mediterranean, and the great lake called the Caspian Sea. If these lakes have not been always the same as they now are, the nature of this globe must have been altogether different from what it is at present.

A great number of authors tell us that, an earthquake having one day swallowed up the mountains that joined the two continents of Europe and Africa, the ocean made itself a passage between Calpe and Abila, and formed the Mediterranean, which runs as far as the Palus Mæotis, which is five hundred leagues distant from there; so that a tract of fifteen hundred miles was hollowed in an instant to receive the ocean. It is to be observed, at the same time, that in that part of the sea opposite Gibraltar no bottom can be found, which makes the adventure of the mountains still more marvellous.

If it was only to be considered how many rivers of Europe and Asia fall into the Mediterranean, we should see that their waters must necessarily form a great lake there. The Don, the Boristhenes, the Danube, the Po, the Rhone, etc., could not empty themselves into the ocean, unless we choose to amuse ourselves with the imagination that there was a time when the Don and Boristhenes came over the Pyrenees to visit Biscay.

Philosophers, nevertheless, have insisted, that the

Mediterranean was produced by some accident. They ask, what becomes of the waters that so many rivers are continually pouring into it, or where the Caspian Sea can empty itself. They have supposed a vast subterranean cavity to have been formed, in the general subversion of the system of the earth, that threw out these seas; and that they have a communication with each other, and with the ocean, by means of this imaginary gulf. It has likewise been affirmed, that fish have been thrown into the Caspian Sea with rings in their noses, and taken out afterward in the Mediterranean. In this manner have history and philosophy been treated for a long time; and since true history has taken away the fiction, and real natural philosophy that of airy hypotheses, we ought no longer to give credit to such idle tales. It is demonstrable, that exhalation alone will sufficiently account for these seas not overflowing their shores, and that there is no necessity for them to empty themselves into the ocean. And it is highly probable, that the Mediterranean Sea has always occupied its present place; and that the fundamental constitution of this universe has never suffered a change.

I am well aware that there will always be a set of people, upon whose minds a petrified pike, found upon Mount Cenis, or a turbot in the country of Hesse, will have greater weight than all the arguments of sound philosophy. They will still be fond of imagining that the summits of the mountains have heretofore served as a bed to the ocean, notwithstanding the impossibility of the thing from the laws

of nature; while others again will think, from finding some few Syrian shells in Germany, that the Syrian Sea came to Frankfort. A taste for the wonderful is the parent of hypotheses; but nature appears to delight as much in uniformity and unchangeableness, as our imaginations do in surprising revolutions: and, to use the words of the great Newton, *"Natura est sibi consona"*; "Nature is consistent with herself." We are told by the Scripture, that there has been a deluge; but there remains no other monument on the earth—at least that I can perceive—but the remembrance of so dreadful a prodigy, which in vain admonishes us to amend our lives.

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